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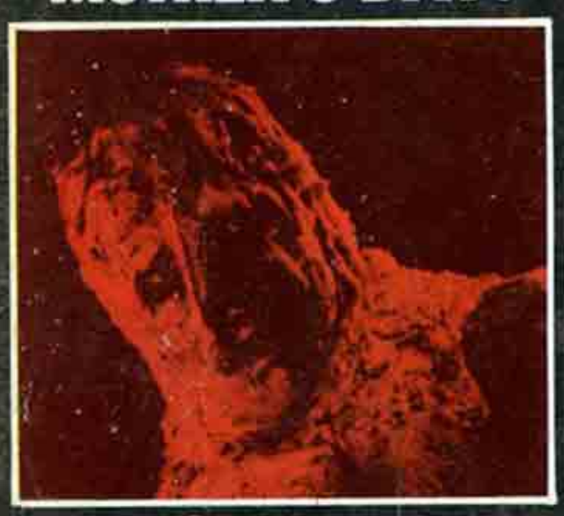

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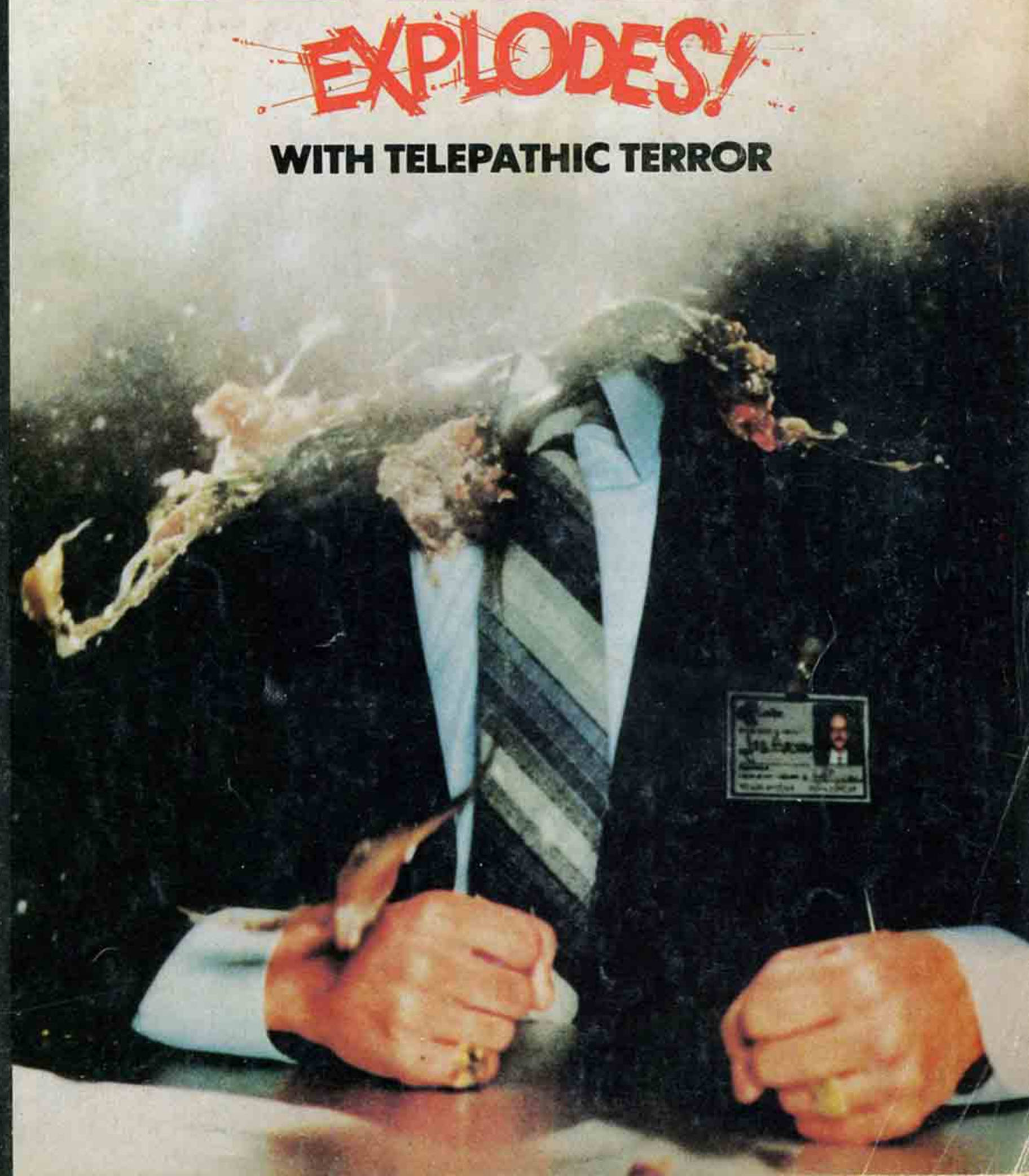

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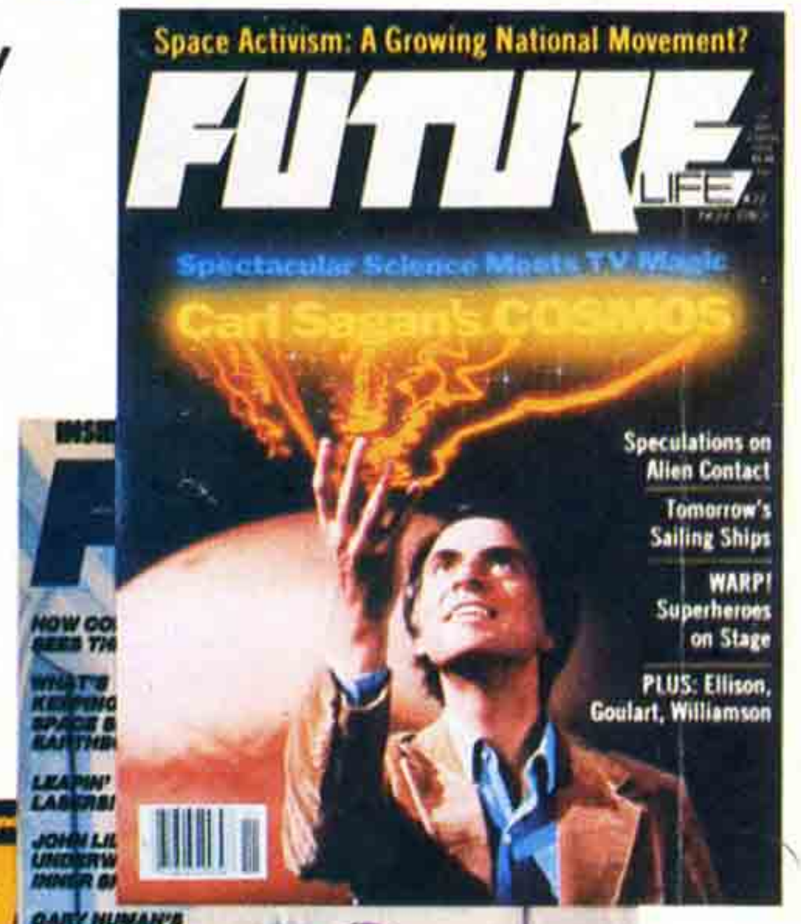

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FANGORIA

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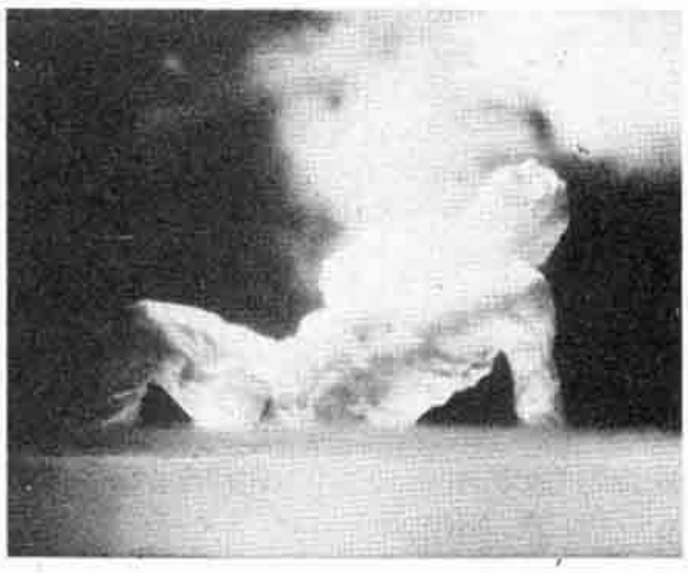

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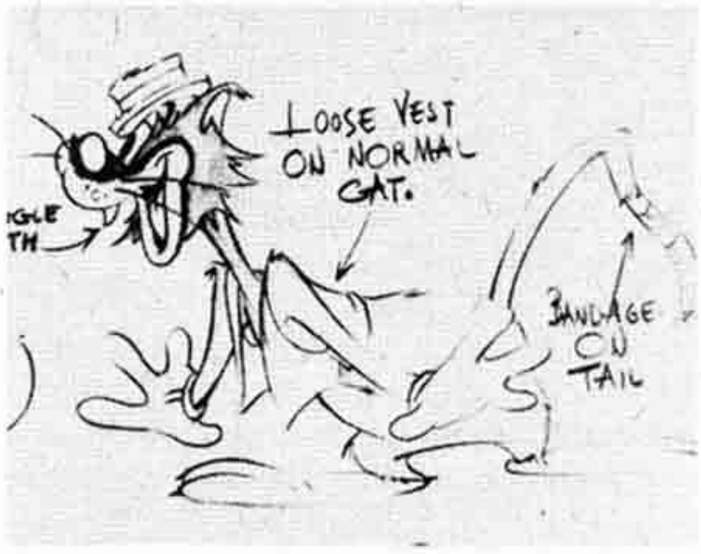

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FANGORIA

JANUARY 1981 #10

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This issue is respectfully dedicated to **Uncle Floyd, Count Floyd** and **Pink Floyd.**

Production Assistants: Eileen Dempsey, Cindy Levine.

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Imagination Inc.

Bits and Pieces

I was all set to regale you with another crusading editorial on reform of the movie rating system—in fact, I'd even interviewed Richard Rubinstein, producer of *Dawn of the Dead*, about current proposals for the change of the existing system, and an alternate plan to set up a second, co-existing system. But, as I write this, all that's certain is that the ratings situation will change, sometime in the next few months. When we have a better idea of what those changes will be, and whether they will affect horror film production in the 80s, we'll be talking about it right here.

* * *

Instead, let's meet Robert Greenberger, our brand new managing editor. (Our old m.e., Bob Woods, is now editor of FUTURE LIFE. On the other hand, fabulous FANGORIA freelancer Ed Naha is a *former* editor of *F.L.*—who said this isn't the age of full employment?) But—where was I? Oh, yes, I was about to introduce you to "Ghastly" Greenberger. Bob's been a horror fan since birth, and a comics fan even longer. He became involved in fanzines and fan conventions as a teen (which was not very long ago—he's 22), and when we found him he was working at the offices of DC Comics as an editorial assistant and comic art archivist. Needless to say, even a dyed-in-the-wool comics lover with a cush job at DC could not resist the opportunity to work at the World's Greatest Horror Mag, so here he is. Thanks to Bob, you'll be seeing more comics coverage in the issues to come than we've done in the past—*please* let us know what you think. Finally, I'm sure all our readers will want to join us in congratulating Bob on his recent marriage, to darling Debbie Upton, on October 18, 1980!

We like to keep our feature pages relatively free of unseemly plugs for the products and projects of our friends, but this is an editorial, so what the hey. Ed Naha (remember him from the past paragraph?) has his first SF novel out, *The Paradise Plot*—about a maniac who beheads people with a laser-sword in the confines of an orbiting space colony. Don't wait for the movie! While you're in the bookstore, you might also check out *The Compton Effect*, a medical thriller by Leslie Horvitz (he covered *He Knows You're Alone* for us in #9) and H. Harris Gerhard, M.D. Both books are from respectable publishers (Bantam and New American Library), and they have nice covers so you shouldn't be ashamed to read them in public places.

* * *

On our last page, you may have noticed, we regularly run a box labelled "Things to Come" in which we regularly tell you what to expect in the very next issue. However, space limitations and timeliness of new movie coverage often squeezes an article or two out (like the *Mighty Joe Young* piece that we finally present in this issue). Another thing that occasionally happens is that a publicity or production executive might indicate that an interview with someone will be "no problem"—and then that turns out to be untrue. That's what happened when we first announced a John Carpenter interview in these pages a year ago, and it's happened again, this time to our plans to interview Tobe Hooper on the making of *Funhouse*. In the case of Carpenter, the problem was simply one of communication; eventually we were able to contact him personally and conducted one of our most enjoyable interview sessions. In Tobe Hooper's case, a serious illness in his family recently caused him to leave England, where he was working on a new film, and return to his home in Texas. An interview at this time seems quite unlikely, and we are now working on alternate plans for the coverage of *Funhouse*. We also told you last month that we'd be covering *Dead And Buried*, a film about the "living dead" written by Dan O'Bannon and Ronald Shusett. However, production delays have pushed that film's release date up a few months, so photos and interviews are not available at this time.

In order to make "Things to Come" a more reliable report of what's in the future for FANGORIA, as of this issue we are previewing not just the next issue, but the next *several* issues of the magazine, and reporting only those articles that we *know* will appear. OK?

Next time I'll talk about the makeup man as the new *auteur* of horror film, and how this fits in with British semiotic film theory. Or maybe not.

—Bob Martin

The Postal Zone

Four Eyes

That's right—four eyes are scanning your letters these days, thanks to our newest staff member, Bob "blood'n'guts" Greenberger, who helps Bob Martin get through the big words. With two people reading the mail, we now need twice as many letters, so get your crayons, kiddies, and send your love-notes and your hate-mail to:

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Glut Follies

Dear Bob,
. . . Many thanks to you (and to John Carpenter, a fellow USC alumnus) for the nice plugs in FANGORIA #8. Actually, I've been doing a lot more over the years between besides writing Marvel Comics scripts and the novelization of *The Empire Strikes Back*, but this letter is really to dispel any unfounded rumors or misconceptions concerning the "legendary" John Milius student film in which I was the subject.

Yes, indeed, there was such a film, a 16mm short subject called *Glut*, shot in 1967 shortly after my graduation. John wrote the script. The film was directed by Basil Poledouris, who composed the music for John's *Big Wednesday* and Randal Kleiser's *Blue Lagoon*. Randal also worked on *Glut*—as a camerman if my memory serves me right.

Glut was ostensibly a "dramatic documentary" about me. When I first read the script, my reaction was that it was really more about John Milius and his unique personality than about me. But, since I had some hopes of being an actor or stuntman (or both) in those days, I went along with the project, hoping to end up with some nice footage of myself delivering lines, doing some stunts, etc., but only after changing some of the dialogue to fit my own character. One scene was very loosely based on an actual happening in which I'd tried to get a stunt job on the Sam Katzman film *Riot on Sunset Strip*, but the rest of *Glut* is mostly fictitious, with me portraying some other guy who happened to have my face, my name and my "Purple Monster" costume. The film played theaters and education TV shortly after it was made. I guess it's become some kind of USC "classic" over the years.

My memory is a bit foggy on this, but it seems that—at various times—both George Lucas and John Milius had plans to remake *Glut* as a feature. And yes, there was some talk—though I can't exactly remember with whom—about my not being the "type" to play that character. Since the original script of the short subject was quite removed from my real-life personality (at least I hope so!), maybe I wouldn't have been right for the remake anyway.

So far, people have told me, *Glut* has sort of been remade as *Hero at Large;* but then, maybe *Glut* was a remake of *Morgan* in a strange sort of way?

Don Glut
Hollywood, CA

PHOTO: COURTESY DON GLUT FROM HIS *MONSTER RUMBLE*

Tasty Reading

Dear Bob,
. . . Well, I don't believe it! An issue (#8) of FANGORIA I could read without losing my appetite for 3 days!

I decided with issue #7 that this one would tell me if I was to continue buying your magazine or not.

On the whole, your publication is untouchable in the field of horror-SF, and I have come to look forward to all behind-the-scenes interviews and news of upcoming productions.

However, your coverage of all the cheap, sensational, blood-letting, gore-gushing, here today-gone-tomorrow, give us your money and puke, trash movies and make up technique is truly ruining your otherwise superior magazine.

A true horror movie scares you—it doesn't give you a heart attack! A true horror movie runs a chill up your spine—it doesn't make you want to vomit! A true horror movie you can laugh about and discuss when you're leaving the theater—not feel physically ill about, or have to bury its memory because it was so violently, gruesomely terrifying.

To sum up, the point I am trying to make is: why cheapen your magazine with articles on gore movies?

Tim McLaughlin
281 Center Street, Apt. C-1
Manchester, CT 06040

Tim, you have every right to feel that way. But FANGORIA just wouldn't be the same magazine if we couldn't cover films like Dawn of the Dead, Phantasm, The Brood, *or this issue's* Scanners *and* Mother's Day. *While these films all contain scenes of grotesque violence, the men who made them saw to it that they had something more than the type of film you're describing, and most of them were totally ignored by all the other film magazines. As for some of the lesser efforts we've covered, we've had fun doing it, met some people we liked, and expect that these people will make better films in the future. By bringing our readers' attention to the effort and creativity that some people do bring to films of graphic horror, we're crazy enough to believe that we're encouraging a better approach to that style of filmmaking. One thing is sure—if graphic horror is treated as if it were pornography, that is what it will become.*

Blood, Siskel & the Ratings

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . There is, or used to be, a distinction between horror films and atrocity films, a distinction that Gene Siskel seems to understand a whole lot better than you do. If the distinction is ever re-established, and the domains of nightmare are reclaimed from the goremongers, it will be thanks to people like him; no thanks at all to your sort.

Hurray for Mr. Siskel
Galen Peoples
Bloomington, IN

Dear Mr. Martin,
. . . Your column came in handy a few months ago, when my parents became quite upset when they learned I had been going to the weekend late shows of George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*. I had seen it only three or four times then.

Sooh, my entire family was locked in debate whether or not I should be allowed to see the film. I am sixteen years old, but my height often allows me to pass for eighteen. Anyway, just when it seemed I would never see *Dawn* again, or for another two years, at least, I produced FANGORIA number two and read "Imagination Inc." aloud.

To make a long story short, your fine essay put what I had been telling my parents into reasonable, intelligent terms, and gave my claims greater credibility. Confronted by this, my parents conceded and allowed me to keep seeing the classic film.

I strongly suggest any other persons having the same problem to get a hold of FANGORIA number two.

Thomas Jankiewicz
Sterling Hts., MI

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . Since Ontario is the largest film market in Canada, most films are first screened by Ontario censors (regarded as the strictest in Canada), and on occasion, some footage is deleted. Since it is too much trouble to replace the outtaken scenes, the censored films are sent to other provinces. Most other provinces have

The Postal Zone

boards with the power to cut movies, but luckily, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Quebec do not cut or ban films, although Quebec is the only province that does not get Ontario-cut films.

Horror films are often among those cut.

There were 50 prints of *The Legacy* distributed in Canada last year, and 32 of these prints were cut by the Ontario Board of Censors. A scene with a burning body was shortened, and sound FX of bones being crunched by a dog was taken out.

Eleven of 13 prints of George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* were extensively cut because of the effectiveness of Tom Savini's make-up effects. One other shot was taken out in British Columbia: "Reel #7. 1039 feet from end of reel, cut 37 feet; Intestinal organs being pulled out."

The system can be fought however; when fellow Canadian David Cronnenberg's film *The Brood* was screened, the scene where a dwarf repeatedly struck its victim with a mallet was cut out. Undaunted, Cronnenberg personally saw to it that an intact print was sent to all other provinces. Truly a move to be applauded.

Zen Faulkes
Box 1141
Killarney, Manitoba, Canada
ROK 1GO

Dear Mr. Martin,
. . . Concerning your editorial in #8, I'm afraid to say that we haven't seen the last of Gene Siskel! He appears on a TV program called *Sneak Previews*, on which he recently shredded *Terror Train*, again revealing the ending. After showing a clip from the film, Siskel and his sadistic buddy Roger Ebert (film critic for another Chicago newspaper) claimed that people who make such "gory, disgusting trash" should be put up against a wall and shot. I myself snuck into a theater showing *Terror Train*. It was gory, but it also had some very subtle moments. Somebody ought to lock those guys up! Keep 'em screaming!

Scott Lingley
955 Princess
Sarnia, Ontario
Canada, N7S 1Y8

We used to watch Sneak Previews *just to catch the film clips—but those two are just too aggravating to watch! Thank you (and everyone else who wrote in) for supporting us in our crusade for the right to be terrified!*

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . I'm writing to you about the readers who write in about excessive gore. The cover says just what's inside . . . Fan-GORE-ia! I personally think you don't print enough of it. I do make-up and I study the pictures. If they don't want gore, let them just read STARLOG or FUTURE LIFE!! FANGORIA is a magazine of horror and any horror film is bound to have gore. Please keep printing those pictures for make-up artists to use for reference in making those things.

Jeff Barkley
8335 Zeta Street
La Mesa, CA 92041

P.S. It's only make-up!

Low-Grade *Fade*

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . Being both a movie critic for my high school and an avid fan of horror films, I strongly felt that *Fade to Black* should have been omitted from your very good magazine. Let me tell you why.

For two months, I had been patiently waiting for this movie, and then when I saw the commercials for *Fade to Black*, I really started to get excited. I figured that with Dennis Christopher in it, the movie would be top notch (**** to me).

Ha! Was I made a fool of! *Fade to Black* left a bitter taste in my mouth. Not only was the screenplay insidious, the acting was also. Dennis Christopher resembled nothing more than a zombie from *Dawn of the Dead*. In fact, when you came right down to it, *Fade to Black* was not a horror movie, it was a stale, obnoxious comedy with no laughs. I feel it should only receive *½.

In conclusion, the person who said, "Never underestimate the intelligence of the public" must be a genius. I still can't believe I wasted $4.50 and two hours of my life on this abysmal movie.

Paul Lanner
17 Leona Street
Staten Island, N.Y. 10314

You should know better than to listen to us! We've covered movies a lot worse than Fade to Black! *Seriously, though, when we've been able to see an advance screening and feel that a movie will be worth your while, we say so in our coverage. Many of the films we feature are not available for screening before our press time.*

Burning Memories

Dear Bob,
. . . Your editorial in #8 had a profound effect on me; now I'm going to have to write a letter too! Forry Ackerman told me that a group of nuns became upset recently and caused quite a stir in the N.Y. area when they discoverd that *Famous Monsters* had published some "grotesque" photos from *Friday the 13th*. Now, what got them upset was not simply the publication of those particular photos, but the fact that *FM* is readily accessible to any youngster who wishes to check out issues of the magazine from his/her local library.

This brings to mind something that occurred some years ago. I had written an article for *FM* #123 with an adult audience in mind; specifically directed to the parents of *FM*'s young readers. It was meant to allay their fears about their children's interest in monsters & monster magazines by pointing out that FM is simply a healthy form of "escapism"—and by reminding them of other forms of *extreme* escapism . . . like alcohol and drugs.

I don't know if the article did anyone any good—but it did backfire in at least one instance. An irate parent, sick of his son's interest in the subject, wrote in. This disgruntled fellow had evidently conducted his own study and concluded that horror movies—and *FM*—were responsible for the hideous murders our society experiences on a daily basis. His letter rambled on for several pages, and was printed in *FM* #130 as an article, titled "The Most Horrifying Article We've Ever Published."

My own article had begun with a fictionalized account of a young boy who has to sneak his copies of *Famous Monsters* home because his parents wouldn't knowingly accept his reading such a "trashy magazine." This little story ends with the father discovering his son's monster magazine collection and burning it—and there the article proper begins. But the parent who read this article really did burn his son's magazines, and even gleefully admits in his letter that he got the idea from my article!

You can imagine how I felt, having penned the very article that set this parent off!

There will always be those individuals who, like this maniac, prefer to blame their kids' behavior on a convenient scapegoat—like "monster magazines"—rather than confront the real problem . . . which, in many cases, lies within the parent himself.

Randy Palmer
FANGORIA/*Famous Monsters* contributor

Carpenter Delayed

. . . On the last page of the Carpenter article (issue #8) it says that John Carpenter would be interviewed by Steve Swires in STARLOG #39. Well, I couldn't wait to buy my copy and read the interview—but when I did I couldn't find it anywhere. What happened?

(continued on page 55)

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DAVID CRONENBERG'S

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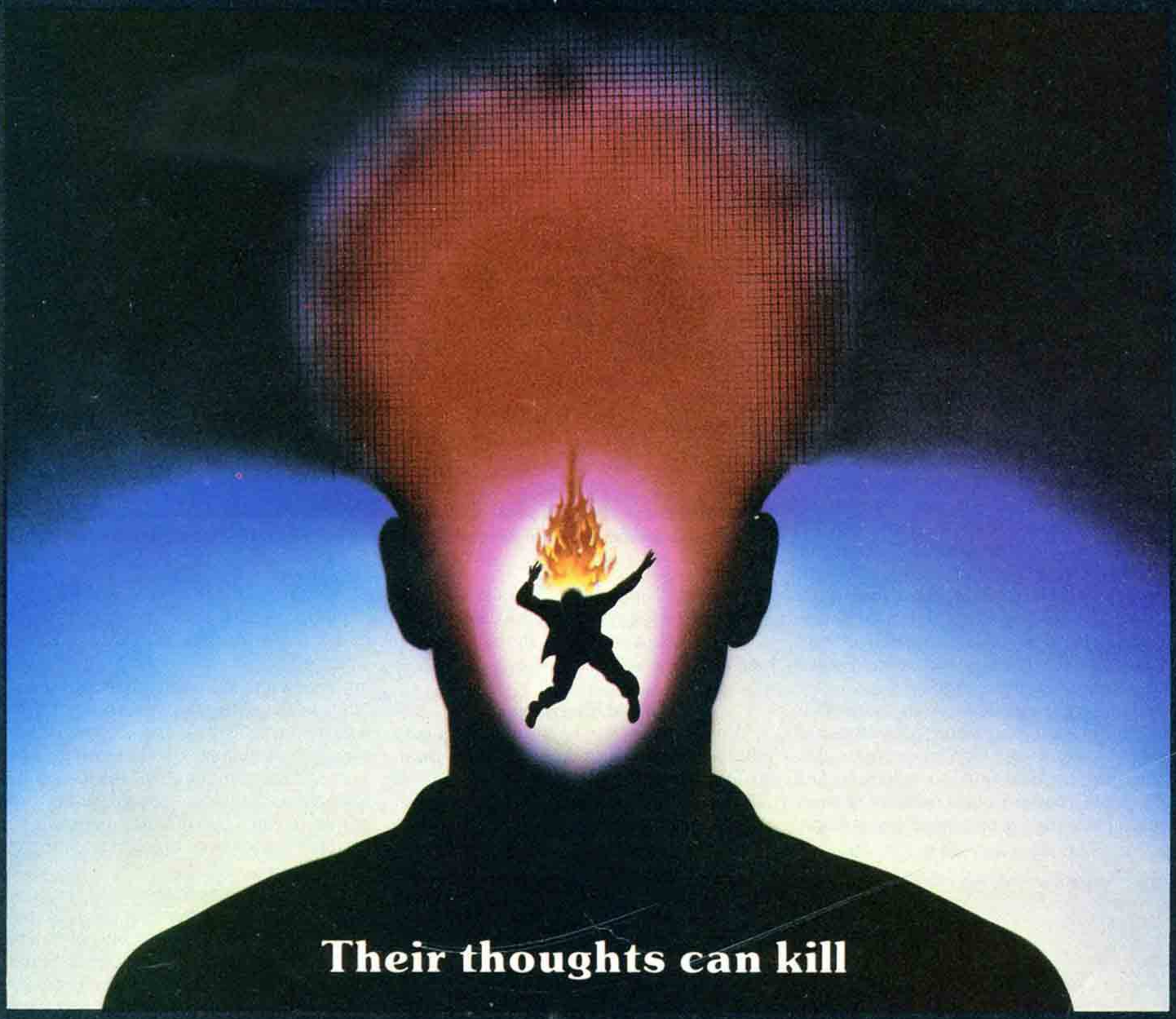

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Their thoughts can kill

By BOB MARTIN

It's the mid-1980s. Though not known to the general population, a new strain of humanity has emerged, perhaps the next step in human evolution. These are the scanners, people possessing incredible powers of telepathy. There are 237 scanners scattered around the globe ... and no one, anywhere, is safe.

That's the basic premise of *Scanners*, and for writer-director David Cronenberg, the film represents something of a departure. All three of his previous terror films concerned "ordinary" people cast into a nightmare by some form of physical mutation: the lustdriven parasite of *Shivers*, *Rabid*'s sexual vampire, *The Brood*'s hate-born brood-children. The mutants of *Scanners*, however, remain quite normal in appearance; it's their powers of mind that have changed. Set in the future, *Scanners* is more of a science fiction film than Cronenberg's previous terrors, but horror fans will be pleased to know that the film carries more than its share of sledgehammer shocks.

As Cronenberg puts it, "my horror films all have elements of science fiction, so it would be inevitable that my science fiction films would have elements of horror as well. I don't know at what balance point you'd call a film 'horror' as opposed to 'science fiction.' None of the stuff that I have done—and probably none that I'll ever do—is really hard core science fiction, which I tend to associate with hardware. You'll often find science fiction writers saying, '20 years ago, I predicted satellites.' That doesn't interest me at all. If that becomes the purpose of the fiction, it's not going to last very long because once there are satellites, it just becomes a historical curiousity."

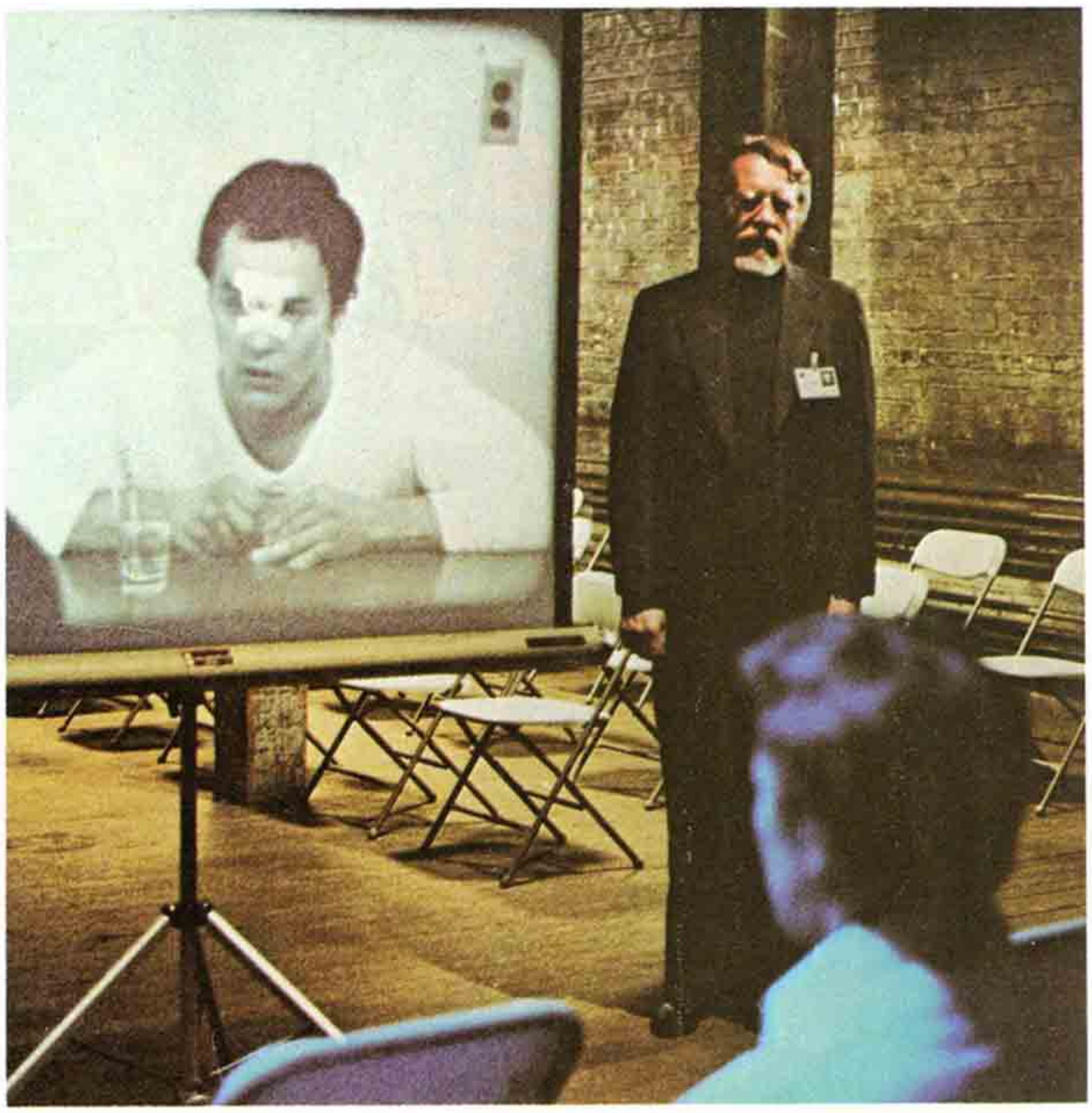
As Cronenberg pointed out in a previous FANGORIA interview (issue #3), it was the grim philosophy lurking behind

the ghastly transformations of *Shivers*, *Rabid* and *The Brood* that made those films such effective shockers. "*Scanners*' direction is quite different," admits the 36-year-old director. "Those dynamics are not what make it work, in fact they're almost not there at all. What does lay behind the film is a fantasy, I think a very powerful one, that I suppose starts as a child's fantasy. You go to sleep weak, and wake up finding that, in fact, you are strong. Someone says to you, 'not only are you not weak, you are stronger than you ever imagined'—that's one of the premises of the film, though it doesn't come out exactly that way."

Scanners' first scene takes place in an auditorium at the Consec Corporation, where scientist Dr. Paul Ruth (Patrick McGoohan) heads a program designed to study the powers of the scanners, to determine how they may be used for the "best interests" of humanity. A demonstration has been set up so that Consec's most powerful scanner can show the extent of his telepathic talent. Before the demonstration is completed, the power of another scanner interferes with the experiment, and Consec's top scanner dies a most horrible death (as depicted on this issue's cover). The scanner assassin, Revok (Michael Ironside), escapes to rejoin his outlaw group of scanner terrorists.

The loss of their top scanner cripples Consec's research program, and they set out to recruit "new talent." They find Cameron Vale (Stephen Lack), a 35-year-old derelict. Dr. Ruth teaches Vale to use his powers—powers that Vale never knew he had. Ruth and Vale are equally surprised to learn that Vale is the most powerful scanner yet discovered.

Consec has awakened Vale to his powers, and given him a reason to live. Assured of his loyalty to the Consec program, Dr. Ruth sends Vale out to infiltrate and expose the underground network of scanner rebels. In the course of his mission, Vale meets Kim Obrist (Jennifer O'Neill), a beautiful telepath who helps Vale to learn the truth about scanners, about Consec—and about himself.



Dr. Ruth's home movies: crazed scanner rebel Revok (Michael Ironside).

ALL PHOTOS: 1980 Avco Embassy

Gifted Teenagers

While the powers of the scanners may bear some surface resemblance to Brian de Palma's gifted teenagers in *Carrie* and *The Fury*, it's obvious even from this brief synopsis that those powers are simply the starting point for *Scanners*. In 1969, Cronenberg made a short experimental film called *Stereo*, his first film shot in 35mm, which also dealt with telepathy. In comparing the two films, Cronenberg notes that "they both use telepathy as a metaphor for a certain sensitivity—and a certain closeness and complexity of relationship. *Scanners* adds something else—the idea of the telepath as 'outsider'—by virtue not only of his power, but his strangeness as a result of having been brought up with that power."

When Cronenberg speaks of the scanners' powers, it often seems that he's speaking—perhaps just a bit—about his own unique talents. During our last interview, which occurred shortly before *Scanners* was announced, he told us about how he became a filmmaker.

Like his lead scanner, Cameron Vale, the young Cronenberg had no idea of the career that lay ahead of him. "In Toronto, you're completely isolated from any idea that you could make a film," the director recalls. "It's not like growing up in Hollywood."

His plans at the time were to become a novelist, following in the footsteps of his writer father. As a teenager, his first fiction was rejected by *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Later, while attending the University of Toronto as an English major, his life was changed by just one movie.

"Another student at the university made

Robert Silverman as a scanner whose loose grip on sanity is aided by art.

a film," Cronenberg says, "and it was a revelation for me. I thought, my God, it walks and talks like a real movie, but it's got people I know in it! Nowadays, kids start making films in public school, so it's hard to realize what a tremendous shock it was for me to see that film. I started to read *American Cinematographer*, and I went to the encyclopedia and looked up 'lens' and 'camera.' I knew absolutely *nothing* and started from the technical end, and I hung out by camera stores, to speak to cameramen."

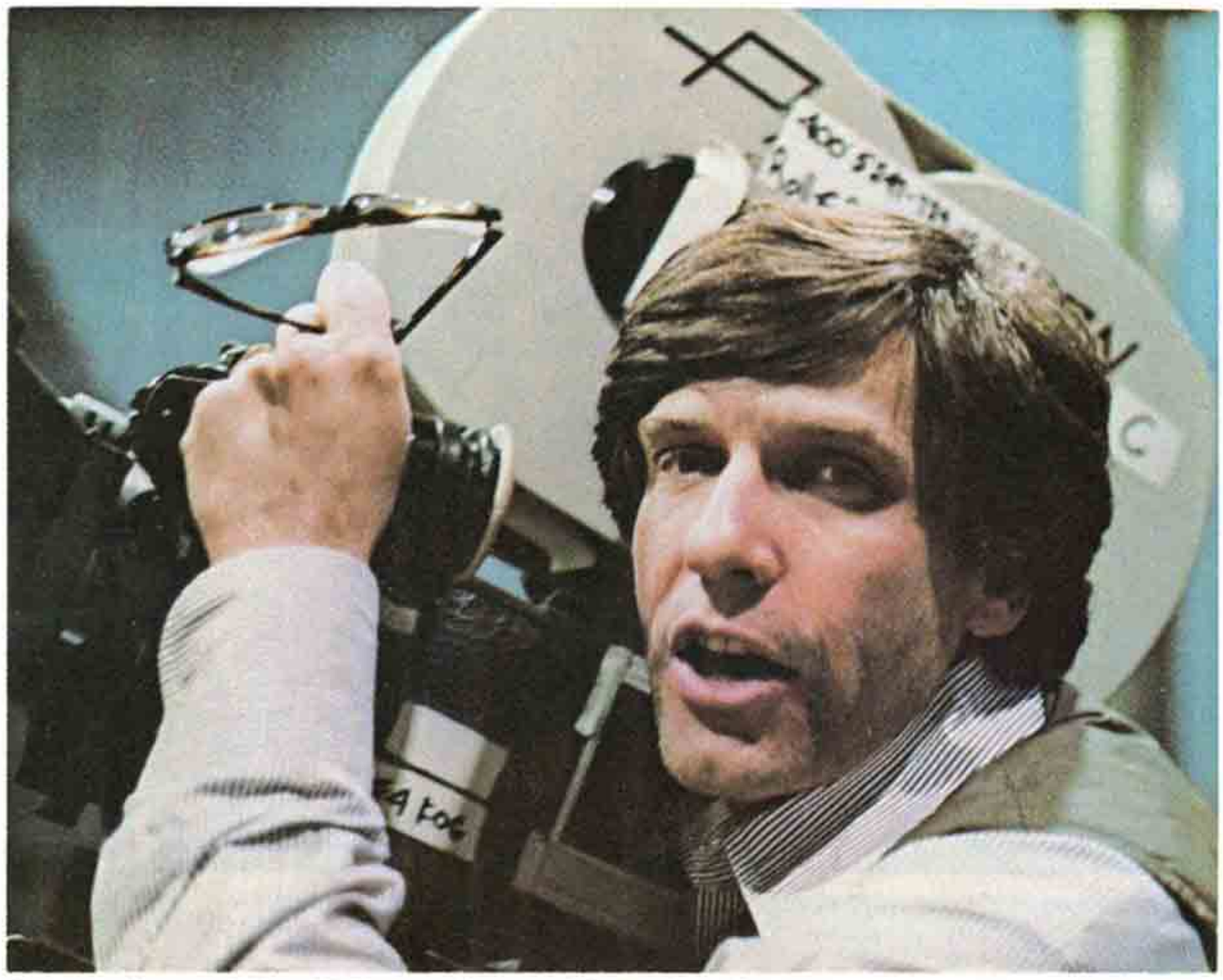
The fact that Cronenberg is a completely self-taught filmmaker might be one reason why his films are so unique, though he disagrees on this point. "I believe that someone of a very forceful creativity will be able to break free of whatever influences are restraining him. I've gone through that in terms of my writing, where I was very influenced by other writers. In fact, that comes out in a phrase in *Scanners*: 'With all those other voices in your head, how could you hear your own voice? That's true artistically, and it's also true of society in general."

Cronenberg freely admits that *Scanners* has been his most difficult film to make. "It was physically exhausting—very hard, very long hours. And it was very cold and damp during shooting, even our interiors, because we were using warehouses and abandoned buildings that were no longer heated, and Montreal in the winter is very cold.

"It was also very demanding because we had so little preproduction time. It was my biggest budget [around $5 million], my longest shoot—it turned out to be about 9 weeks—but I only had about two weeks for all the preproduction, which is ridiculous. And I had only written one first-draft script, which took me three weeks to write. That meant a lot of things weren't together. But it had to be done, so I found myself writing on the set, writing at lunch instead of eating, writing evenings, writing weekends. Then we had to juggle the schedule to make scenes that weren't ready, in terms of special effects and sets, happen later in the shooting, which you don't have to do if you're prepared. So in production terms it was very difficult.

"Because of that, I told the producers that we needed a very long post-production period, and they agreed. And we've had a fairly sizeable post production budget to help compensate for those things. I'm happy to say that it all came together miraculously well. It's an extremely complex movie in terms of plot, characters and action. And conceptually complex, because of what scanners are, what they do and why. There were times when I didn't know if I'd be able to make it all work, but it does work, and I've been getting the strongest reaction from people on this film that I have had of any of them."

While both Stephen Lack and Jennifer O'Neill are accomplished performers, and the real stars of *Scanners*, the most intriguing bit of casting was applied to the role of



A rare photo of David Cronenberg without his glasses.

Dr. Ruth, the man who heads Consec's scanners program. Ruth is played by Patrick McGoohan, whose work on television has produced two of the most admired series ever made—*Secret Agent* and *The Prisoner*.

"He was ... very *interesting* to work with," says Cronenberg, after a moment's hesitation. "He's certainly a very brilliant man, he's also a very complex man, and a very eccentric man. I don't think he would refute any of these. No two days were the same, except in terms of his performance, which was uniformly brilliant. I think that it's one of the best performances that he's given in a long time—not that he hasn't been good, but he's just particularly superb in this role. I've been very happy with his participation."

As the scope of Cronenberg's work has grown, so have his film crews. *The Brood* and *Scanners* both employed a number of cast and crew members from the U.S. We wondered whether working with an international crew had any special poblems for Cronenberg. "Actually not," the director replies. "A lot depends on the specific temperament of the people involved. Patrick (McGoohan) was very impressed by the crew in Montreal; he had been a little worried about coming into the provinces, worried about the professionalism of the people. It didn't take him long to come to depend upon them, and feel secure about it. Dick Smith, too, came to be pretty happy with the people there, and his Montreal-based assistant, Stephen Dupuis. At that point, it becomes truly international. It's no shock to me in any way—we really do speak the same language."

Among the imported talents Cronenberg worked with was Dick Smith, the acknowledged master of prosthetic make up, whose accomplishments are chronicled elsewhere in this issue. Also on board was Chris Walas, whose work for *Galaxina* was featured in issue #7, and who has since completed work for the upcoming prehistoric comedy *Caveman* and the Disney-Paramount coproduction *Dragonslayer*. "Dick Smith was with us right from the beginning, as a consultant," says Cronenberg. "Chris Walas, Stephen Dupuis, and the other effects men, Tom Schwarz and Gary Zeller, along with the art director Carol Spier and I, all went down to Dick's house in New York state. We discussed everything, I told him what we wanted, and he talked to everyone about what materials he thought should be used, techniques and so on. I was very flattered that he showed a real interest in the film; he said he liked the script and the idea of the film enough to work on it, but he was just exhausted from working on *Altered States* for 10 or 11 months. So he was very 'present' from the start, though the one thing he said he couldn't do was come up to the set.

"For the last scene, though, our lack of preproduction finally caught up with us. Some of the effects that we wanted just didn't work well enough, we really hadn't worked them out in enough detail to make it work. By mutual consent, everybody agreed that they hadn't worked, including the effects men, and it was just the end of the line for *everybody*—we were all exhausted. So, after editing for quite a few months, I got to that scene, and I said to the producers, 'look, there's nothing there, we've got no ending. Everything up to that point is incredibly strong, and it's just not going to work.' We had thought of releasing the film in Dolby stereo, and we

(continued on page 46)

ALL PHOTOS: 1980 Mothers Day Co.

MOTHER'S DAY

An interview with director Charles Kaufman about the first horror movie to honor Mother!

By ROBERT GREENBERGER

Texas Chainsaw Massacre undoubtedly started it all. *Dawn of the Dead* popularized it and *Motel Hell* capitalized on it. But *Mother's Day* takes it to the limit.

What is *it*? It's the "funny axe-ploitation" film—movies that bring you shocks and yocks. These movies are made with an awareness of the humor and absurdity that are inherent in wretched excess—while keeping a firm hand on the cinematic thrills as well.

Mother's Day opens with the conclusion of a seminar given by Ernie (Bobby Collins)—a two-bit version of Werner Erhard who calls his system for personal development, Ernie's Growth Opportunity (E.G.O.—get it?).

Mother (Rose Ross) offers to give two people a lift home but first takes them to meet her sons, Ike (Holden McGuire) and Addley (Billy Ray McQuade). The terror starts when the boys decapitate one of Mother's chums, on screen.

The action shifts to introduce three young, pretty former college roommates. Jackie (Deborah Luce) is a successful New York career girl who has gotten ahead in the world but has had horrendous luck when it comes to boy friends. She has planned a surprise weekend reunion with her roommates and sends out the word.

Abbey (Nancy Hendrickson) is overjoyed to hear about the weekend because it gives her a chance to leave behind her drab Chicago life and her sick mother who tries to dominate her life.

Trina (Tiana Pierce), the bored Beverly Hills girl, perfunctorily goes along with the annual reunion but begins to think they are boring and no longer fun.

They go camping in the wilderness and have a fun time, rediscovering their friendship. Around the campfire, they reminisce about their escapades as "The Rat Pack" and how Abbey and Trina always protected Jackie, the natural victim.

As the girls romp through the forest, Ike and Addley lurk behind a convenient bush, observing their innocent games (including a brief skinny-dip in a nearby pond). That night, the twisted brothers pounce on the comely campers, turning their sleeping bags into three escape-proof prisons, and drag the screaming girls home to Mother. Beginning with Jackie, the boys begin to play games of terror, supervised by their malevolent Mom, as Trina and Abbey watch in stark terror.

Meet Charles Kaufman

Talking with Charles Kaufman over lunch is a much more relaxing experience than watching his first horror movie. Frequently injecting humor and anecdotes into the conversation, he spoke freely about directing the movie. The film, he claims, came as a result of a camping experience a few years back.

"I had these friends in college," Kaufman explained. "We were very close. We roomed together, we rented a house together and we were in the same fraternity together.

"We decided when college was over to get together once a year to kind of compare notes on how our lives have changed, what was new in our lives, how our thinking was different. Also to renew our friendship," Kaufman said.

Taking a bite of his pickle, he continued, "The format that we used was what

On the opposite page, Ike (Holden McQuire) looks lovingly into the eyes of horrified Trina (Tiana Pierce) in the inset. Ike then argues the merits of disco and punk with his brother Addey (Billy Ray McQuade). Above, Abbey (Nancy Hendrickson) tries to hold on in a desperate escape attempt.

was called a 'mystery weekend' in the film. One person would plan the weekend, the three other people wouldn't know where they're going and, just like in the movie, we put bags over the three people's heads and remove them at the appropriate time. One weekend we went to Bermuda, one weekend we went to this alligator-infested swamp area in South Carolina where it was 110 on the coolest night and one weekend we went out in the woods camping."

Kaufman smiled at the thought of the weekend. "And on the weekend we went camping, we went out in the woods. Being city people, we didn't know too much about how to deal with the woods and what noises were and stuff. And during the night we heard noises in the bushes."

The smile becomes bigger as Kaufman adds, "Being New Yorkers, we were seven miles out in the wilderness, my initial thought was—"We're going to get mugged." That was my first thought. We were scared, right?"

After that, Kaufman said the campers took two hour shifts keeping watch over the others. The following day the intrepid friends found a motel for a quieter night's sleep. But it was during his own two-hour shift that Kaufman first got the idea of doing *Mother's Day*. "The rest," he said, "is history. I survived to tell the tale."

Who Is He?

Before all that happened to him, Kaufman was well established in the entertainment business. Born in New York, a graduate of the University of Connecticut, Kaufman enrolled at UCLA's graduate school for television and film. He dropped out of school in order to join Bob Hope Productions, acting as assistant to the producer.

From there, Kaufman went on to news writing for local television stations in Los Angeles and New York. For his efforts, Kaufman received a Golden Mike Award for news writing. During this time, he worked on a number of low-budget independent productions in New York.

After the camping incident, Kaufman set about to create a film that would inspire the same amount of terror he felt that night. The group of four guys became three girls, the unseen terror became two homicidal boys under the strict guidance of their mother, and the resolution to the problem was not going to a motel the next night. The film was a story of survival and overcoming the odds.

Kaufman vs. The Censor

Producing the film almost became that too. Kaufman and producer Michael Kravitz (who was also eating pickles at lunch) were making the project with low-budget funding and a short shooting schedule. When the project was finished, they had to find a distributor.

Kaufman purposely avoided mixing the film's violence with any overt sex as "consideration for the ratings board. We knew if we mixed sex and violence together, we would not get an R. It turns out we weren't given an R anyway.

"The ratings board would have given us an X. Now ask me why we got the X."

When asked, Kaufman replied loudly, "Because we're little guys! Because we're independents. It is my belief, and Michael's as well, that if Paramount, Warner, Universal, etc . . . if we had decided to go with them, we could have submitted the picture and gotten an R. But we didn't."

He feels this is discrimination on the part of the Motion Picture Association of America. "We made five cuts of the picture, five cuts according to their specifications and they still didn't give us an R. The version that's being shown now is the original version.

"In the long run," Kaufman explained, "It was a wise decision. At least now we know the film has made it on its merits. If we cut the film down and it bombed, we never would have known what would have happened if we released it as we wanted. Now we know."

Mother can take care of herself.

In recent months, many movies have been released without a rating. The trend began two years ago with George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*. There has been a lot of talk as well, concerning the need for broadening the ratings structure so graphic horror movies do not get an X and lose their audience. Leading the drive away from the ratings has been United Film Distributions.

UFD distributed *Dawn* with the determination not to let the ratings stop them. It so happens, Kaufman's movie is being distributed by UFD also. "UFD had the guts to get behind it and forget the ratings system and say let's go with it the way it should be shown," Kaufman said.

"It's real tough to make it as an independent. You can do what we did and not accept the rating and go unrated. It's tough. You're taking a big chance when you're an independent because you're shopping the picture around to all these distributors. What happens if no one wants it?

"We gave our picture to United Films, not because that was the best offer we had, but we knew that they would handle it very, very carefully. They do very few pictures a year and if we had given our picture to United Artists or Warners, they might have played it in Buffalo, New York, test-marketed it, not done well and dumped the film," he said.

He paused to eat some of his sandwich and then continued discussing the marketing and success of the movie. "The first place we opened was New York and they did a job on it. We know they're going to continue doing a job on it. And there's one person we can call and say 'We didn't like the way you did this, and I think it's important to encourage distributors like United Films that are not majors, that are independent distributors, that cater specifically to young new filmmakers and the production groups."

The job UFD did was to heavily advertise the film and open it in some of the best first run houses in New York City. The day the film opened, people with sandwich boards walked through the city handing out flyers telling people to see the film. On the streets were stenciled announcements alerting New Yorkers that *Mother's Day* was approaching.

The approach seems to have worked. According to *Variety*, *Mother's Day* opened with high grosses at the theaters in the city. Kaufman delights in the fact that the weekend reports indicated that *Mother's Day* outgrossed everything else that weekend, including Robert Redford's *Ordinary People*.

"We outgrossed every other picture in New York this weekend and I hope that will encourage independents that are making pictures out there," Kaufman said before taking another bite.

Making the Movie

Newton, New Jersey has its own haunted house. What better place to shoot the isolated home for *Mother's Day?* As they shot the film, another thriller was shooting in the nearby Blairstown. That movie came out in June—*Friday the 13th*. The state is starting to be nicknamed the "Hollywood of Horror" by press agents. The house was complimented by surrounding woods and a remote former YMCA camp.

"The house was a place where no one had lived for 15 years. The rumor was that the last person to live in there died there, he was killed in there. When we moved in, there was no water, no electricity, nothing," Kaufman said.

Kravitz corrected that assessment as he

(continued on page 58)

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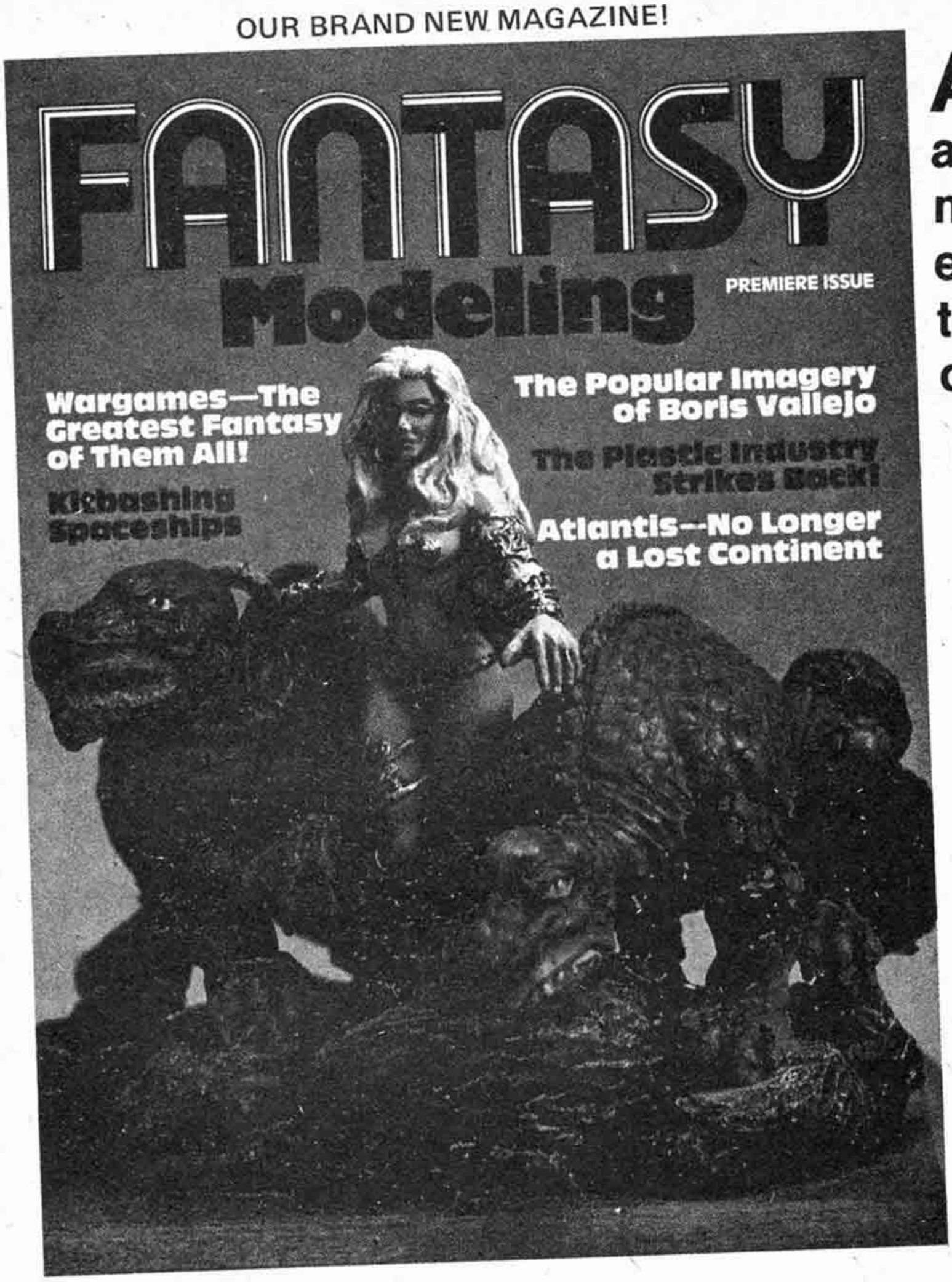

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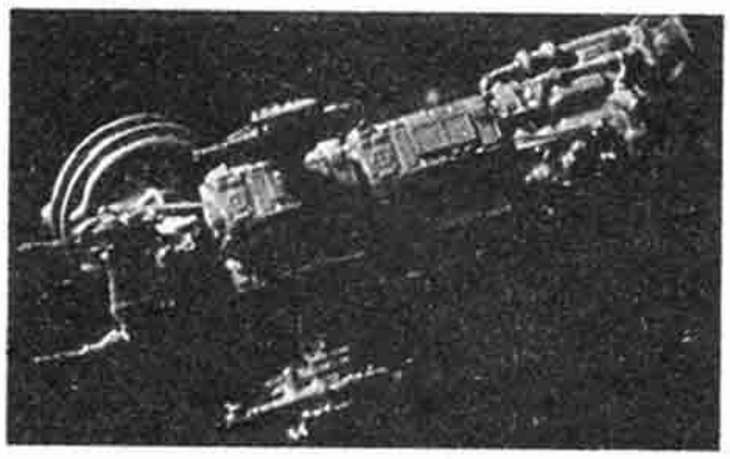

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I Create the Body Cosmic

Make-up King Dick Smith talks about the creation of Altered States' *amazing effects and all the problems along the way.*

By ED NAHA

"We've created a lot of new, marvelous innovations for this movie. We've done things on this picture that I really thought would be impossible to do."

The speaker is Dick Smith and, in contemporary movie circles, he is just the man to call on when a film needs to make the impossible possible. One of the most inventive makeup artists in the history of cinema, it was Smith who changed innocent Linda Blair into the raving demon in *The Exorcist*, who turned Dustin Hoffman into the wizened, old *Little Big Man* and who choreographed Robert DeNiro's bloody antics in *Taxi Driver*.

This month, it is Dick Smith who will take a human being through several stages of genetic transformation in the eyeboggling film *Altered States*. Based on the 1978 novel by playwright Paddy Chayefsky, *Altered States* is the story of scientist Edward Jessup (William Hurt), a man obsessed with the origin of humanity. Conducting a number of experiments using mind-bending drugs in conjunction with extended stays in water-filled isolation tanks, Jessup attempts to find a connecting thread between modern man and his primitive ancestors. He finds the emotional link but, in doing so, sets off a mental trip wire that actually alters his physical state of being. During the course of the story, Jessup metamorphoses violently; alternating between a primitive form and a being half human and half cosmic energy.

When producer Howard Gottfried and director Arthur Penn brought the project to Columbia Pictures in 1978, they knew that, if anyone could physicaly create Chayefsky's strange transformations on the screen, makeup expert Smith could. Penn had already witnessed the extent of Smith's magic in the box office hit *Little Big Man* a decade earlier. Smith was contacted by the director and the struggle to bring *Altered States* before the cameras began.

For a while, the drama behind the scenes was more intense than anything found in the script. Sitting in his upstate New York home, Dick Smith recalls the confusion and craziness which led to one of his most ambitious projects to date. "It all started quite innocently enough," he says with good-natured humor, "they *all* do. I was called in by Arthur Penn in June of 1978. I read the script and I was rather excited about it. The initial makeup requirements consisted mainly of my constructing what we call a 'mole' to travel under the skin of the actor's arm who was going to play Jessup. In the movie, when he is beginning to change his form, this mole (*Ed. note: in the movie, it is the first cosmic warning of change to come; a traveling lump of skin which runs along the outside of his skin*) runs up the actor's arm to his elbow and, then, disappears. There was also an ape creature, a little Jessup, to be designed but that didn't seem all that difficult. Arthur thought that there might be a few more little makeup 'problems' to worry about but nothing stupendous. With those understated makeup 'problems' still unknown, I launched myself into what turned out to be a horrendous job."

Smith began meeting with Gottfried, Penn, Chayefsky and the film's special effects chief, John Dykstra, every few weeks. These brainstorming sessions proved anything but productive, however. "At just about every meeting," recalls Smith, "we'd change everything that we had settled on in the previous meeting. Everything. We'd start from square one and state that everything that we thought was really terrific in the previous meeting was really lousy. This went on for weeks. My problem in these meetings was trying to get people to discuss my makeup chores—which were growing with each passing week.

"Everyone would readily discuss the optical special effects but they seemed to hesitate when it came to discussing makeup. I should explain that Arthur Penn wanted a physical approach to the illusions we were going to create. He tended to be leary of overcomplicated optical effects."

At this point in time, the film's script alluded to two major makeup scenes. Towards the end of the story, Jessup undergoes a strange cosmic transformation while housed in his isolation tank. Bursting forth from the tank, he mutates into various amorphous shapes before the eyes of his horrified wife (Blair Brown). The second major transformation scene occurs during the film's finale when both Jessup and his wife experience a metaphysical transformation.

Says Smith: "Arthur's theory at that time was that the tankroom scene should be done with optical effects. It wouldn't lean that heavily on makeup. Whereas the ending would be almost totally makeup, involving extensive physical transformations. I expressed doubt that this would work in that, in order to pull it off, we'd have to use rubber full bodysuits. I felt that it would be a waste of time to try to create something on the screen that was, in essence, a metaphysical transformation, in a physical way. I thought the rubber suits would be inadequate at best and, possibly, quite obvious. Arthur, however, felt that the rubber suits were the way to go. So, I started designing the rubber suits."

Even at this early stage of preproduction, *Altered States* was proving a headache in the making to Smith. Production designer Joe Alves and John Dykstra brought in a sculptor named David Sou-

PHOTO © 1980 WARNER BROS

Dick Smith's makeup artistry and Bran Ferren's opticals inflict the world's worst identity crisis on William Hurt.

salla. It was Sousalla's job to sculpt the various stages of Jessup's physical transformation for Smith to work from. The only problem was that the artist had no working knowledge of makeup application. And so, while Sousell sculpted bizarre figures on the West Coast, Smith struggled with his realistic rubber prototype on the East.

"I started to create a very rough full bodysuit," Smith says. "It was improvised out of sheets of soft polyurethane foam coated with a flexible urethane rubber. The first suit involved a scene where Jessup has one long, grotesque arm and a shriveled stump on the other side. The initial suit only went down to the waist. We blanked the face out with a few appliances.

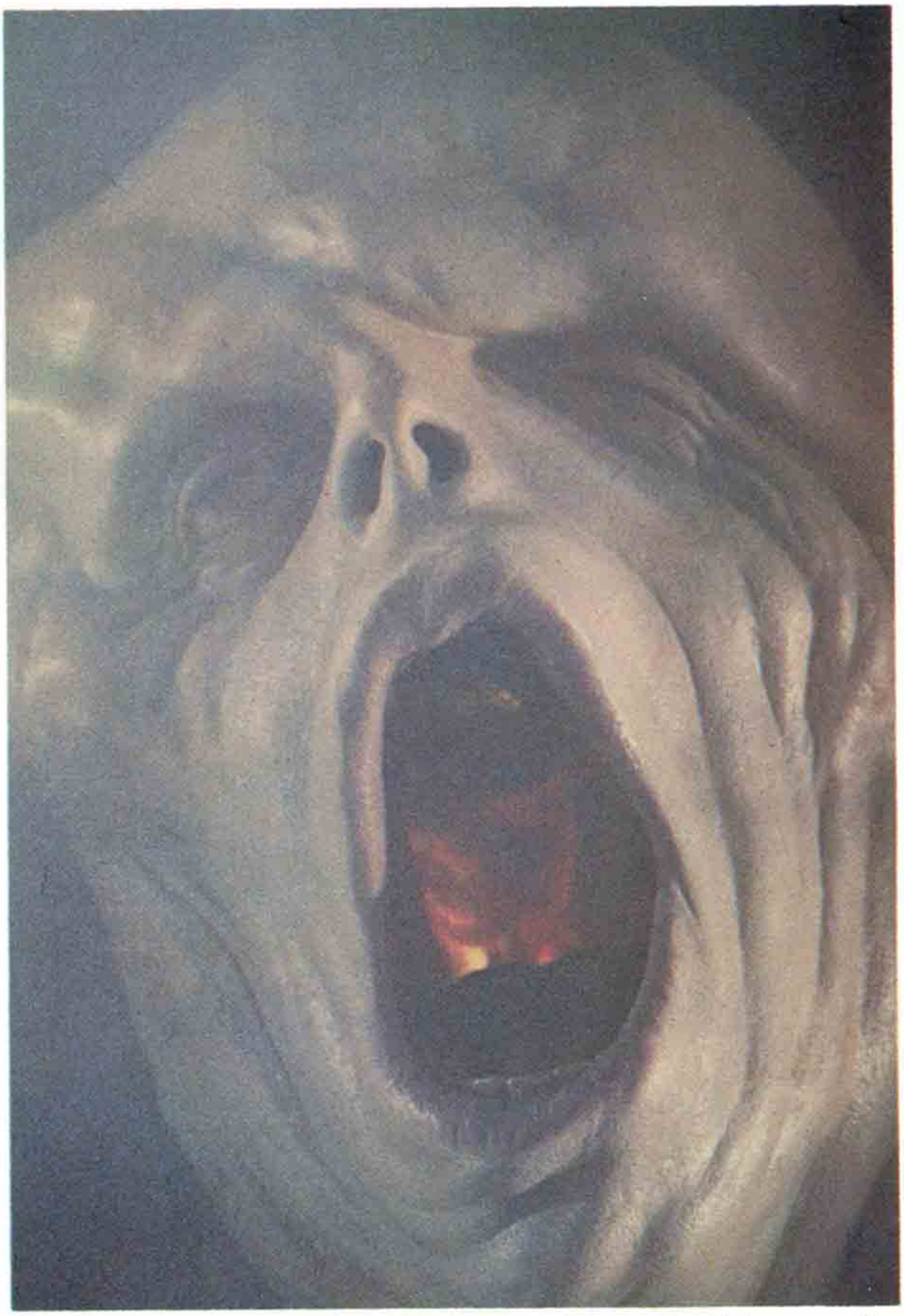
"We shot a little movie test in a neighbor's basement with my son, David, filming with a 16mm camera. We came up with some footage that showed Jessup's chest inflating. It was crude but very encouraging. The people on the coast thought that a rubber suit was possible and, the funny thing was, it was beginning to look better on the screen than even I thought it would look."

Meanwhile, back at *Altered States* headquarters, the sculpted look was beginning to spell trouble for Smith. "The next problem was that David Sousalla was under orders from Arthur Penn. He did not accept advice or instructions from me very readily. He was creating these tremendous little sculptures. He was very talented but he had no concept of the practical makeup problems involved. He tended, as sculptors do, to exaggerate the human figures. They were caricatures. The proportions were not close to human proportions to start out with. You couldn't take an actor and put him inside one of these figures. He'd never fit.

"I complained about that but no one listened. Along the way, I made little sculptures myself. I did them hastily, however, as reference for the body suits. They weren't as detailed as David's. That was a big error on my part. Arthur was judging the direction of the makeup by the dramatic impact that these little statues had. David's were certainly more dramatic but they had nothing to do with realistic makeup problems."

Finally, a showdown of sorts ensued. Smith managed to get Sousalla to both modify his designs and spend some time working on them in Smith's own East Coast headquarters. While that solved some of the existing problems for the makeup master, the West Coast crew, through their consistent indecision, caused even more Excedrin nightmares.

"I got my notes out the other day from all these meetings we were having," Smith chuckles. "And you wouldn't believe the number of scenarios that we came up with for that tank room sequence. At one point, we had the tank blowing up and Jessup blowing up with it. Pipes break and the tank room is flooded. Jessup metamorphosises into crystalline form. The crystals

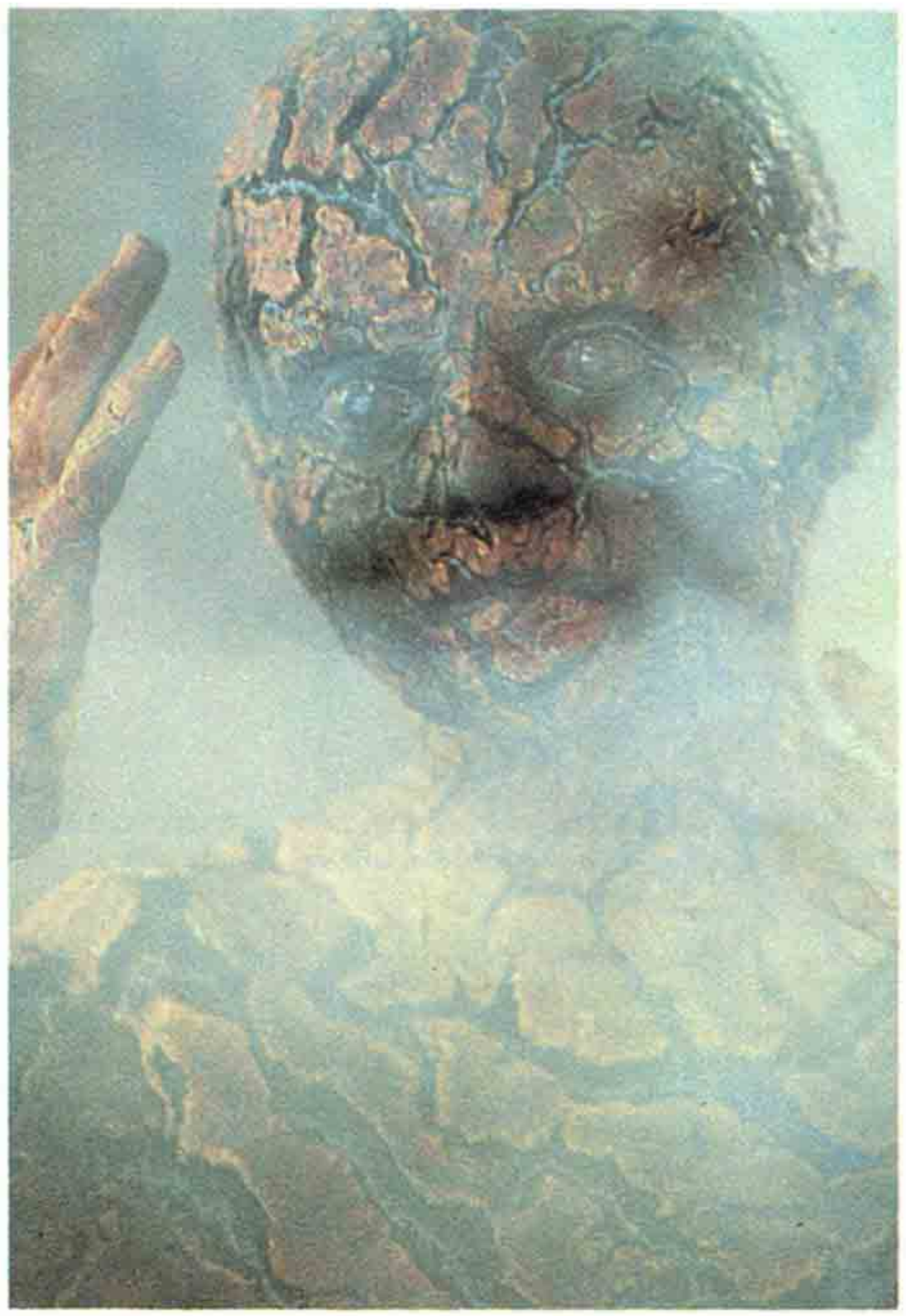


An oversized head, several feet in length, designed to "swallow" the camera lens.

shot up out of the floor and form this shape. Then, Jessup's wife, Blair Brown, comes running into the room and looks into this crystal figure for some trace of her husband. The crystals slowly change and this mudlike form that resembles a Henry Moore statue appears. The mud flakes off the surface and it becomes a statue with Jessup's form inside it in an embryonic sack.

"I remember, at one point, having to consider the difficulties of creating a huge rubber balloon for the actor to scrunch up inside of and, then, figure out how the hell he'd be able to breathe in there. So, now we have in actor in this big sack. He has to struggle out of it. Jeez. During this time period, Penn had in mind Michelangelo's statues of The Slaves or The Captives. There are four of them. Half finished, so the human figures are half stuck in rock. It's a marvelous image to play with, sort of like a fly in amber. Arthur wanted that feeling of a body trying to pull itself loose from something that was gripping it. He never could decide what the hell happens to all the matter that this poor guy chucks off in the process. It was all part of him at first. They were all his atoms in the first place, right? He reconstitutes himself into a new form and then drops half of it on the ground while breaking out of it. How does that make sense? These were just some of the dumb questions I was always raising with Arthur. I tend to be very logical about these things. Arthur used to call me a very good gadfly."

While Penn muled over his effects—laden tankroom scene, Smith toiled away at the increasingly complicated end—sequence. "The ending involved three suits showing the man getting progressively



The suit at left was relegated to the cutting room floor; the "cracked" suit, though seen in the film, is hidden by opticals.

worse physically," he remembers. "The poor fellow sinks into the floor. Arthur wanted one of Jessup's arms to be fused to the heel of one leg. The other arm was to be fused over the top of his head with the hand grasping the opposite cheek. They'd both be locked into these positions by makeup.

"That imposed enormous engineering problems on us. We had to come up with a suit that an actor could get into and that makeup could be applied to. The makeup had to blend in perfectly so it wouldn't seem as if the actor was wearing a hood. The actor could only hold that awkward pose for a matter of a minute or two so we had to come up with a suit that could connect these parts simply and quickly and, then, disconnect the same way. We did it.

"We shot a 16mm test in my garage. It was surprisingly effective. When we were shooting it. I thought it looked lousy. When we saw the test, it proved to me that a rubber suit could be used in these scenes and work.

"We shot the image in mirrored mylar. We distorted the mylar slightly in order to distort the image. It gave us the effect that there was a metaphysical transformation going on. Jessup is not melting into the floor literally, like the *Incredible Melting Man*. His atomic glue is coming unstuck and he's having some kind of molecular disturbance. It's the sort of thing that you can visualize as a vague image that, to me, seemed to cry out for optical effects. Still, the test looked hopeful except for the bloody fact of having to have his hands stuck at those bizarre angles. The actor could hardly move. That's as far as we got when all hell broke loose on the coast."

All hell breaking loose entailed Columbia pictures letting John Dykstra go, having Joe Alves take a walk and giving director Arthur Penn the pink slip for allowing the film to incur, what the studio felt, were phenomenal bills. Director Ken (*The Devils' Tommy)* Russell was signed up and Dick Smith began to worry.

"Now I turned to Howard Gottfried and said 'God, Howard! What's going to happen when Ken Russell comes in? He'll change everything. This is the late fall. We can't possibly start everything from scratch and still make a January 1979 shooting deadline!" With the eternal optimism of all

Dick Smith, left, inspects a prosthetic "withering" arm with director Ken Russell.

The suit designed for the middle, but used in the climax, enhanced by opticals.

producers, Howard smiled and said, 'I don't think he can change much because we've been working on this for four months and we've come up with the best formula.' Famous last words. Of course, eventually, Ken Russell changed *everything*.

"The first change occurred right away. He saw what we were doing with the suits and, in a cool way, approved. After he saw our tests, though, he felt that the rubber suits should be used for the tankroom scene and the opticals saved for the final transformation. So, in essence, we reversed our makeup priorities.

"Now we worked out a plan with Ken for the tankroom scene that consisted of the tank exploding and disappearing, the room flooding, the rest of the people being thrown clear and Jessup disappearing with the tank. After the turbulence in the room dies down, we were to see, coming up from the water, Jessup's arm. It makes a sort of helpless gesture and, then, as you stare at it, it shrivels up. It disappears beneath the water.

"There's a pause. Then, some kind of darkish shape emerges from beneath the water. As it drags itself up, we see that its the mishapen back and the head of Jessup. Here, the actor is in rubber suit number one. He continues to struggle upward until he is poised on one knee. His right arm is missing. There's just this stump. His left arm comes up in this frantic, clawing gesture. He reaches forward, confused, and grasps his head with his hand. The hand then fuses to his head.

"OK. We still have this one hand fused to the head. Thank God I talked Ken out of having the other hand grasping the heel or the fellow would have had one hell of a time getting out of the water. The hand fuses against his head and Jessup begins to scream. Suit number two.

"His body begins to tip back towards the water. The actor is more misshapen in the second suit. In the third suit, he's screaming and his mouth has enlarged to enormous proportions. There's this steady, horrible scream. His whole body is becoming amorphous. He's almost on his back in the water.

"The camera slowly closes in on the figure, zooming in on his oversized mouth. The camera is literally going to go into the mouth. The mouth would then turn into a black hole and the camera would dive through it. Just when it seems that Jessup is lost forever, his wife struggles past the debris and saves him from falling into this black hole by the sheer power of her love.

"How we were going to do a black hole in this fellow's mouth was a source of endless conversation. Anyway, this was what was approved by Ken Russell in January of 1979. They were starting to film the main parts of the movie at that time and I was ordered to have these suits, three in all, ready for May. We worked night and day on them, photographing everything and sending it out to Ken for approval. Then, more problems . . ."

This time around, the problems called for Columbia to drop the picture. Producer Gottfried now had a director and a movie but no distributor. The *Altered States* team aproached Warners with the project, with Smith's pictures of the Jessup sculptures being the only piece of tangible evidence of a film project the moviemakers had. Warners liked the idea and picked up the movie. Before too long, however, writer Chayefsky, not at all pleased at the way the new director was handling his work, took a rather long stroll from the movie set, and vowed to have his name totally disassociated with the film. *(Ed. note: It isn't).*

In the midst of the confusion, Smith was trying to juggle a half dozen makeup problems at once. "While we were making the transformation suits on the East Coast," he states, "they were fiddling with the ape scenes on the West Coast. In one scene, Jessup emerges from the tank transformed into a little australopithecus, a primitive man. We had originally wanted a five foot tall black man for this part. Arthur Penn had found a Nigerian that was quite acceptable. I had suggested a black man because the skin pigmentation would be dark and when we had to apply hair to various sections of his body, we wouldn't have to make up his skin. The basic proportions of the skull would also lend themselves more readily to a primitive man's profile. I didn't want to use big mechanical masks ala *2001*. I wanted to use a minimal amount of facial appliances and the largest possible dentures I could use so that the actor's own lips would be incorporated into the final makeup, creating more mobility for the mouth.

"We cast the body of the Nigerian and we were proceeding to work on his facial appliances when Ken replaced him with a Mexican ballet dancer. The new apeman was very agile. The Nigerian was a soccer player so he was athletic but not necessarily graceful. The new apeman, being a dancer, could handle the action better but he didn't have the profile I was looking for.

"That meant that we couldn't have a factually-oriented primitive man profile. Ken didn't mind at all. 'Just make him look good and primitive' he said. So, I just gave him large dentures, designed some light appliances for his face and, at Ken's request, gave him blue eyes like actor Bill (Jessup) Hurt. The finished makeup is far more human and modern than we had originally contemplated.

"Now, I was in my lab with my chief assistant Carl Fullerton. I couldn't have done this movie without him. We were still working on this tank room suit stuff when they were shooting the apeman scenes in California. I couldn't take care of the makeup I designed so Craig Reardon, a very talented young man, and Mike Hancock, worked on the scene on the coast. That was a four hour makeup job. Since the creature wasn't really an apeman as much as a human ape, the hair had to be pasted on each section of the body. At first, I toyed with the idea of having a zip up ape suit like the ones used in *2001* but, to be honest, they're awfully expensive and have their limitations in terms of movement.

"You also can't have suits like that made with short hair. The shorter the hair, the more the foundation the hair has been sewn onto shows. To make it look like a hairy man, the hair had to be layed on the actor's skin directly. The hair was pasted ahead of time on a lifesized form and then was applied on the actor in mats. We had the hair laid in patterns, patterns that would work on the front of the torso, etc. The hair was laid in an anatomically correct manner.

"The patterns followed the natural directions of hairgrowth on the body. These mats were sprayed on and removed everyday. It took four hours to apply all this and,

(continued on page 56)

An Anatomy of TERROR

What makes terror work? And what will frighten us in 1981? We asked John Carpenter, Avco Embassy Pictures, Sean Cunningham, Richard Rubinstein, Don Coscarelli, the Jerry Gross Organization, New World Pictures—and lots more people who should know!

By DAVID B. NICHOLS and BOB MARTIN

Most of us have wondered now and then just what it is that gives a good horror film such powerful appeal. It seems a simple question, but it holds within it a profound contradiction—the very idea that anyone would enjoy the sensation of being scared out of their wits remains totally incomprehensible to many people. So it's examined, again and again, in magazine articles, newspaper and TV news reports, and entire books. Unfortunately, many of the reporters, journalists and authors investigating the topic do so from the outside looking in. What about the insiders—the film directors, producers, actors and promoters of the current crop of film frights? The folks who make their living by scaring the pants off America have generally done some long, hard thinking about the topic, but are seldom consulted for their opinions.

Here, we make an exception. We've talked to many of the key figures on the horror scene about the meaning of their work and, for those of you who get bored easily, we've also unearthed some very exciting future film projects, that you'll be reading about for the first time.

Undoubtedly the best place to begin is with John Carpenter, the man who set the tone for the majority of current horror films with his third feature, *Halloween*.

Carpenter is seldom given to heavy philosophizing. "My favorite films have always been escapist in nature," he simply states, "and horror movies are a great way to escape. Often, the more bizarre the content, the better."

Scores of knife-murder epics have followed in the wake of *Halloween* and Carpenter has some very distinct feelings about this instance of the "bandwagon effect."

"Yes, it's amazing, isn't it? It's really very flattering, in some ways. It's a cycle. The same thing happened in the 50's, the same thing happened in the 60's, it's part of the Hollywood syndrome. *Poseidon Adventure* came out and whammo—all of a sudden disaster movies were the thing. *Star Wars* is another good example of that.

"But people do like to be scared and pushed to the limit. I think it's also an indication of the times of the world."

Carpenter's next project is more SF than fantasy or horror, though we are told that *Escape From New York* will not be totally lacking in Carpenterian shock. Of more interest to FANGORIA's readers is a "dream project" cooked up for Paramount pictures. While no official announcement has been made, sources at Paramount tell us that plans are afoot for a collaborative film to be directed by John Carpenter, David Cronenberg (interviewed on *Scanners* in this issue) and Walter Hill (coproducer and cowriter of *ALIEN*, and writer-director of *The Warriors*). The film is planned as a three-segment anthology, with each director responsible for one 30-40 minute segment. Story ideas will be developed by all three directors, and the script for the film will be written by David Cronenberg. It was at Carpenter's suggestion that Cronenberg was brought into the project. "I think he's an excellent director," says Carpenter of Cronenberg, "one of my favorite directors around. He has great personal vision—and he's also capable of being very funny."

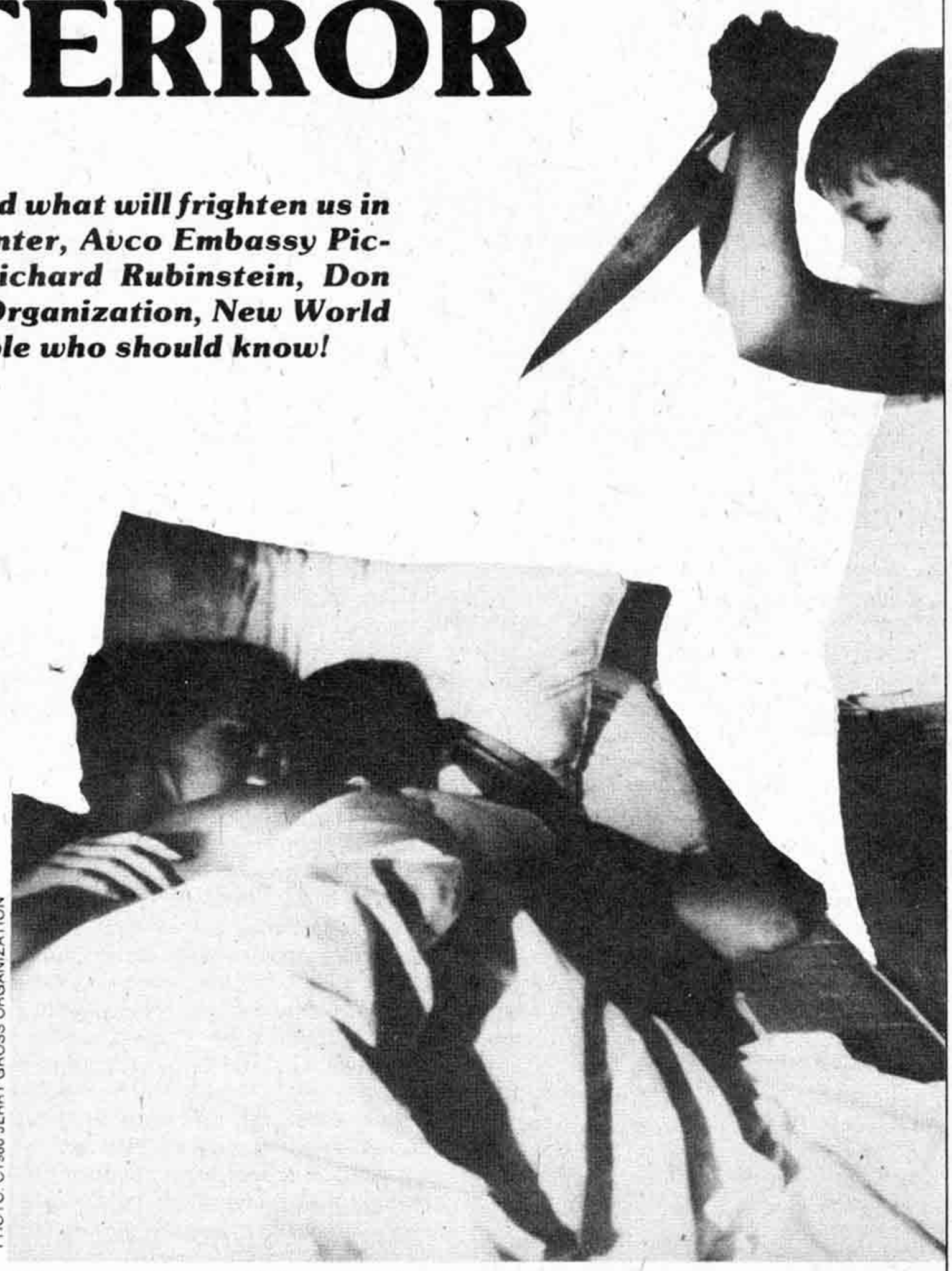


PHOTO: C1980 JERRY GROSS ORGANIZATION

***The Boogie Man:* will the search for the next *Halloween* ever end?**

From Carpenter, it's an easy jump to Avco Embassy Pictures, the studio behind *The Fog* and *Escape*. Like AIP in the 50's and Hammer in the 60's, Avco is becoming the trendsetter for terror in the 80's. With successes like *The Fog, Murder by Decree* and *Phantasm* behind them, Avco is going full steam ahead with *Scanners* and *The Howling*, both of which should be familiar to FANGORIA's readers. Also coming from Avco is *Nighkill*, another *Halloween*-influenced epic, directed by Ted Post, the man who brought you *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*. By winter's end, look out for *Road Games*, starring Jamie Lee Curtis, a Hitchcockian thriller from Richard Franklin, the director of the recent terror import from Australia, *Patrick*. Wes Craven, the director of *Last House on the Left*, was recently signed to direct *Swamp Thing*, based on DC comics' famous moss-covered monster, and the makers of *Prom Night* are preparing a film with the unlikely title *Humongous!*

A film that seems to have Avco people very excited these days is nearly upon us—*Fear no Evil*, the feature debut of writer-director Frank LaLoggia. The film concerns his Satanic majesty, Lucifer, incarnated in the bodily form of a likeable 18-year-old (played by Stephen Arngrim of *Land of the Giants*). Three archangels also walk the earth in human form, determined to finish their battle with the fallen angel, begun twice before in ages past. The third and final battle will blaze to life thanks to the animation effects of Peter Kuran, whose cel animation has graced such previous films as *Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Dark*.

Like many of the young new directors, LaLoggia is a horror fan, one who grew up with *Famous Monsters*. "I've always loved the shock that runs through you in a horror film," he says. "But it is a little dismaying to see people making so many extremely gory pictures. I think moviegoers

Kurt Russell as Snake Plissken, the heroic desperado of Carpenter's *Escape*.

John Carpenter with his producer and frequent cowriter, Debra Hill.

get desensitized to that. Dealing with primal fears is more my cup of tea, and supernatural terror is what *Fear No Evil* is all about."

Avco's resident expert on horror and fantasy, Mick Garris (also known to our readers as co-scripter of *Tanya's Island* and the forthcoming *Toys* and *Classified Secrets*) feels that a variety of factors have to combine to make a film successful on both the artistic and commercial levels. "Commercially, the timing of the release is very important. The characters on screen should be like the people you expect to see it, so the audience can identify with the characters, and feel fear for them. The horror audience is young—that's why horror films are invariably about young people in danger. It also helps to have a number of 'creative deaths' and a strong payoff at the end.

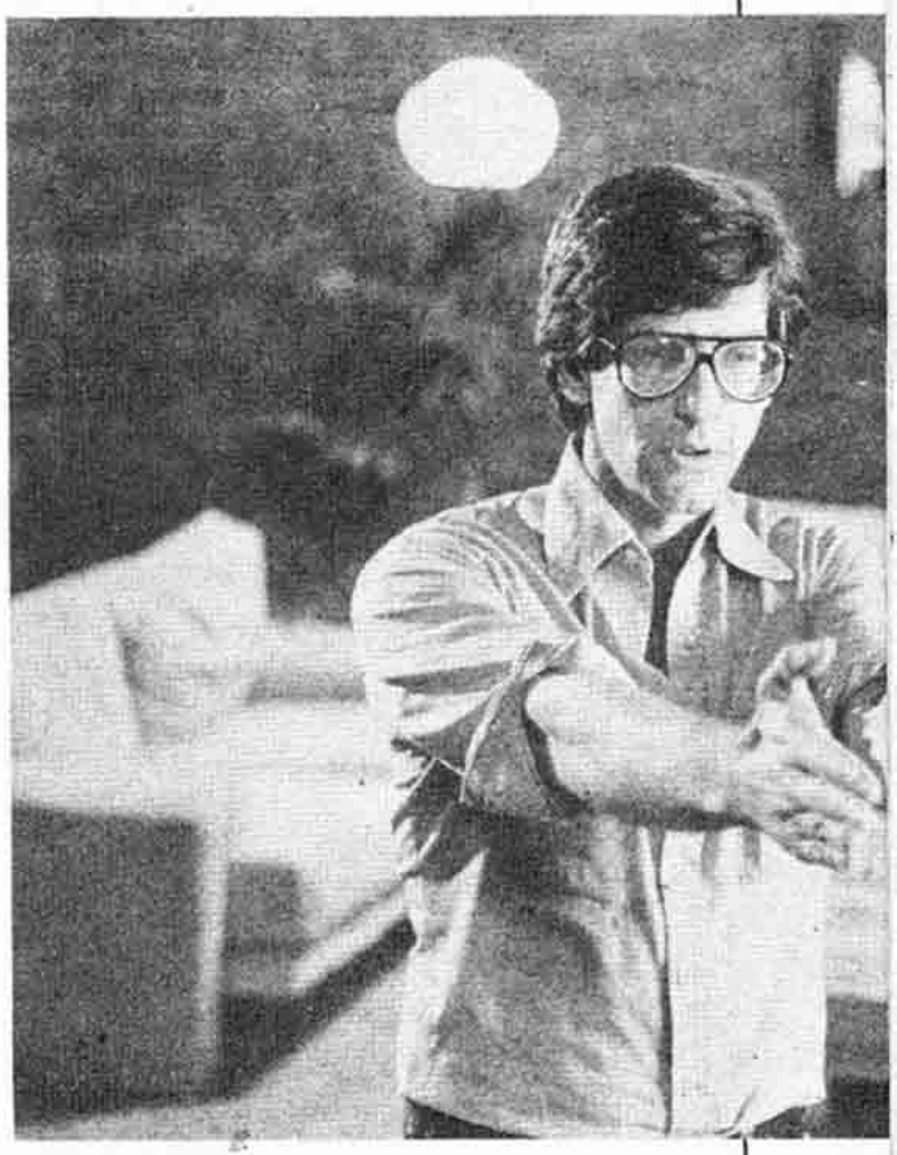
"Artistic success calls for a completely different set of standards. Intelligence in script and direction, some unique angle—essential these days to distinguish a film from the glut of 'knife-killer' movies—and the ability to build fear, rather than repulsion. It's easy to startle someone, it's much more difficult to really scare them."

One of Avco's biggest successes in the horror field was *Phantasm*, directed by one of the very youngest in the new crop of filmmakers, Don Coscarelli. Still in his early 20's, Coscarelli is about to begin shooting his fourth feature film, *The Beastmaster*, a sword and sorcery tale concerning a young warrior in a distant age who is in telepathic communion with the creatures of the world he lives in.

Coscarelli believes that "a really good horror film has to grab the public's attention. I don't think many of the batch I've seen have been very good, and I consider some of them, like *Friday the 13th*, to be murder movies rather than horror pictures. I think people are tiring of murder movies—the market is saturated with them.

"But I love to see a good horror film. A really shocking, intelligent, scary film is still a rarity, which is why they always do well. The market will always have room for films that are original, and really work on you. I like movies that make you talk about them after you've seen them. As far as gore in a horror film, it can be great if it's done in a unique and different way. I loved *Dawn of the Dead* for that reason. Violence produces a strong physical sensation. Being shocked is both pleasant and unpleasant at the same time, and let's face it, we all love it.

"I still prefer a film that hints at gore instead of showing it. Val Lewton's *The Leopard Man* is one such picture."



In *Escape*, Snake encounters Duke, a street-fighting man played by the Godfather of Soul, Isaac Hayes.

One of *Phantasm's* stars, Angus Scrimm, happened to be in Coscarelli's office during our visit. He chimed in with his recollection of a particularly striking scene from *The Leopard Man:*

"Momma needs a loaf of bread. She sends her young daughter on the long trip into the night, told not to return without the bread. We take the trip with the girl, creeping along in the dark. On the way back home the girl worries over reports of an escaped leopard in the woods. We walk through a tunnel . . . all we can see in the blackness are two glowing eyes staring down at her. *Something* chases her, back to the door, something crashes against it. As the woman stares down in horror, she sees a trickle of blood seeping under the door. So, you see, the truest horror lies in your mind."

Few images in modern horror match the menacing evil of Scrimm's performance as the Tall Man of *Phantasm*. We asked the talented actor why horror films have such great appeal.

"It may have to do with our evolutionary background; physiologically we still have a good deal of our prehistoric predecessors in us. They were geared to face danger all the time, perhaps even enjoying the smell of danger as the only relief to the general boredom of hunting for food. There is something in us that makes us crowd around a grisly car accident to see if there are any corpses. Perhaps it's the same part of us that seeks the harmless release of seeing a horror film.

"Horror is so often fantasy that I seldom object to the kind of violence that one finds in a horror film. I object to it more in the current forms of gangster or young thug films, in which people are killed spectacularly, and then you read of a similar murder that actually occurred."

But among the people we spoke with for this article, even the harshest critics of film violence exempted George Romero from their remarks. *Night of the Living Dead, The Crazies, Martin* and *Dawn of the Dead* were usually pointed out as examples of the responsible use of shock effects.

Romero, caught up in the final editing stages of *Knightriders*, was unavailable for comment, but Richard Rubinstein, the producer of *Martin* and *Dawn of the Dead* and Romero's partner in Laurel Entertainment, pinpointed for us the quality that sets Romero's work apart. "I think the primary difference lies in character development," he says. "No matter how absurd or fantastic the situation may be, you'll find that George's people are always people who go to the bathroom, live and love and so on—just like people in more ordinary situations. I think that Stephen King does the same thing. It's an affinity for day-to-day life *in detail* that gives George's films more substance than, say, a *Mother's Day.*"

Dawn of the Dead is certainly the most violent of Romero's horror features, and the director explained his approach in an interview with Steve Swires that appeared in STARLOG #21: "Having (violence) in such abundance is almost easier to take than an occasional isolated moment. It becomes texture—it's constantly threatening and you don't know when it's going to unleash. In the same way that we've learned to live with the bomb and with the reality that we can walk down the street and get mugged, and yet we've been able to ignore that and go on with the rest of our lives hoping it doesn't happen to us, I'm playing around a bit to see if the violence can be that dominant and still enable the audience to get past it and experience the story line and the allegory."

By the time *Knightriders* is released, Romero will be ready to begin work on *Creepshow*, from a script by Stephen King. The film will be comprised of several short tales in the style of the early 50s E.C. horror comics. While the possibility of doing *Creepshow* in 3-D was under serious consideration, that possibility now seems extremely remote. *Shoo-Bee-Doo-Dee Moon*, which was planned to start shooting this January, has been pushed forward due to the recent actors' strike. It is expected to go into production under a new title, *The Invasion of the Spaghetti Monsters*, late this year or in early 1982.

Romero has survived years of hard knocks from the press in the past, but these days it's become almost fashionable to acknowledge his talents. Other directors are not quite as fortunate. It's their fans who are lucky, as many of these men have been able to maintain an enthusiasm

David Cronenberg describes the mammoth proportions of his next epic.

Angus Scrimm, known to his fans as the Godfather of Scowl.

about their work, even as the parade of critical acclaim passes them by.

One director who has never had trouble pleasing audiences while enraging critics is Wes Craven, who started his directing career with *Last House on the Left*, followed by *The Hills Have Eyes*, and the TV movie *Summer of Fear* (also shown as *Stranger in the House*) which starred Linda Blair. Craven is currently shooting *Deadly Blessing* for Universal, the story of a young woman involved with a strange religious sect and the dark forces controlled by the cult. By March, Craven expects to start the *Swamp Thing* project mentioned above, for Avco Embassy.

According to an interview by Joseph McBride published in the daily *Variety*, Craven feels that horror films serve a definite purpose. Because they deal with "areas that are taboo; things that are unnameable," horror films attract young people and minorities—people who are aware of social problems and the frustrations of modern life. The horror audience, says Craven, is composed of "people who are uninhibited, people who are frustrated and want to express their frustration; the barrier between them and the screen is much less there than for the audience of *Ordinary People* or a Bergman film."

Craven finds violence "a way to exorcise horror. It's almost like playacting. They know it's syrup, not blood, and a plastic axe. I can certainly tell you that in the cutting rooms there's a lot of laughing going on.

"*Last House* was really a reaction on my part to the violence around us, specifically to the Vietnam war. I spent a lot of time on the streets protesting the war, and I wanted to show how violence affects people. It blew away all the cliches of handling violence. Before that, violence had been neat and tidy; I made it painful and protracted and shocking and very human. And I made the people who were doing the killing very human.

PHOTO: COURTESY SEAN CUNNINGHAM

Sean Cunningham, the short one, certainly *looks* harmless enough.

"But I'm avoiding shock and gore now. I don't want to do that to people anymore. I'm much more of a social animal. Before, because of the war, I felt no hope. *Last House* was a howl of anger and pain. Now I have more happiness in me. I'm more interested in entertaining people. I'm mellowing, I guess."

"Mellow" is an adjective seldom applied to the work of Craven's former partner-in-crime, Sean Cunningham, the producer of *Last House* and director-producer-writer of *Friday the 13th*. But the moralists who have jumped on Cunningham are generally unaware that the director made two light comedies between *House* and *Friday* that now languish in the vaults of the studios that bought them, unreleased.

In explaining the popularity of *Friday*, Cunningham says "people like to have a roller coaster ride. When you come off, you're exhausted—you've released a lot of pent-up emotion."

Cunningham is more than a little frustrated by the accusations of excessive violence in the film. "I recently cut the TV version of *Friday the 13th*; I only had to cut about 22 seconds of the film, and there just isn't any blood there! The actual act of violence is a single moment. The suspense—and the effectiveness of the film—depends on prolonging that moment. It was that suspense, the feeling that it could come at any time from anywhere, that made some people think that it's such a terribly violent film."

The film's sequel is now underway, under the working title of *Jason*. Cunningham has been consulted on several aspects of the film, but his name will not appear in the credits—"I've already done *Friday the 13th*," he says. He has completed principal photography on an action thriller called *The Witness*, which concerns a kidnapping, and he's nurturing five new projects; again, it's too early for details to appear here. "You might say that there's three films I want to make—a musical, a children's film, and a thriller." The tentative title for the last of these is *The Stomping Grounds*.

The furor over *Friday the 13th* certainly wouldn't have been so great if it hadn't been such a financially successful film, largely thanks to the promo power of its distributor, Paramount Pictures. Some recent films from the Jerry Gross Organization seem designed to make *Friday* look like a class picnic. *ZOMBIE*'s catchy "We are going to EAT YOU" campaign ate up the competition; *The Boogie Man* combined childhood nightmares with a series of delicately choreographed "creative deaths"; *I Spit On Your Grave* dealt graphically with a series of violent rapes, followed by a young woman's gruesome revenge.

If by any chance you missed these, don't worry—JGO has a passel of similar releases slated for the coming year, including sequels to *ZOMBIE* and *The Boogie Man*. Carol Kane (of *When a Stranger Calls*) and Lee Grant star in *Deviation* (filmed under the title *The Mafu Cage*), also for release this year.

The Gross organization's most intriguing acquisition for future release is the tongue in-cheek *Blood Beach*, starring John Saxon, Burt Young and Marianne Hill. This will be one more to add to a lengthy roster of fantasy and horror projects for Saxon, who has developed some very definite opinions on the field.

"I think it is important that you actually feel that what you are watching might be real, in order for the experience to be successful," he says. "In a horror film, some people need to be hit on the head with

(continued on page 48)

PHOTO: C1980 JERRY GROSS ORGANIZATION

Returning from a dip in *Blood Beach*.

Telling of Tomorrow

A talk with Theodore Sturgeon about some of television's more memorable moments

By PAUL M. SAMMON

Almost everyone knows of Theodore Sturgeon the author, writer of such classics as *More Than Human* and originator of Sturgeon's Law—"95% of *everything* is crap." To a lesser extent, the legion of *Star Trek* fans remember him for two classic television episodes, "Shore Leave" and "Amok Time." What's not as widely known is that Sturgeon has consistently practiced in other media as well—radio, films, and even *more* television (including a French program based on his short story "Bright Segment," which Sturgeon considers the best televised adaptation of his work). In the grand book of communication, then, Sturgeon has written in every chapter.

For instance, one of his earliest efforts off the printed page was a radio adaptation of his short story "The Sky Was Full of Ships." A fine first contact story concerning a murder trial, the discovery of an alien "time recorder," and the final invasion of earth, this was broadcast on CBS radio in 1951. In that same year Sturgeon was also drawn to television. Still in its infancy, Sturgeon remembers that involvement with something approaching relieved nostalgia. "Long forgotten by everyone, thank heaven," Sturgeon now says, "is the fact that the first science fiction series on TV was mine; it ran for 17 months on the ABC network and was called *Tales of Tomor-*

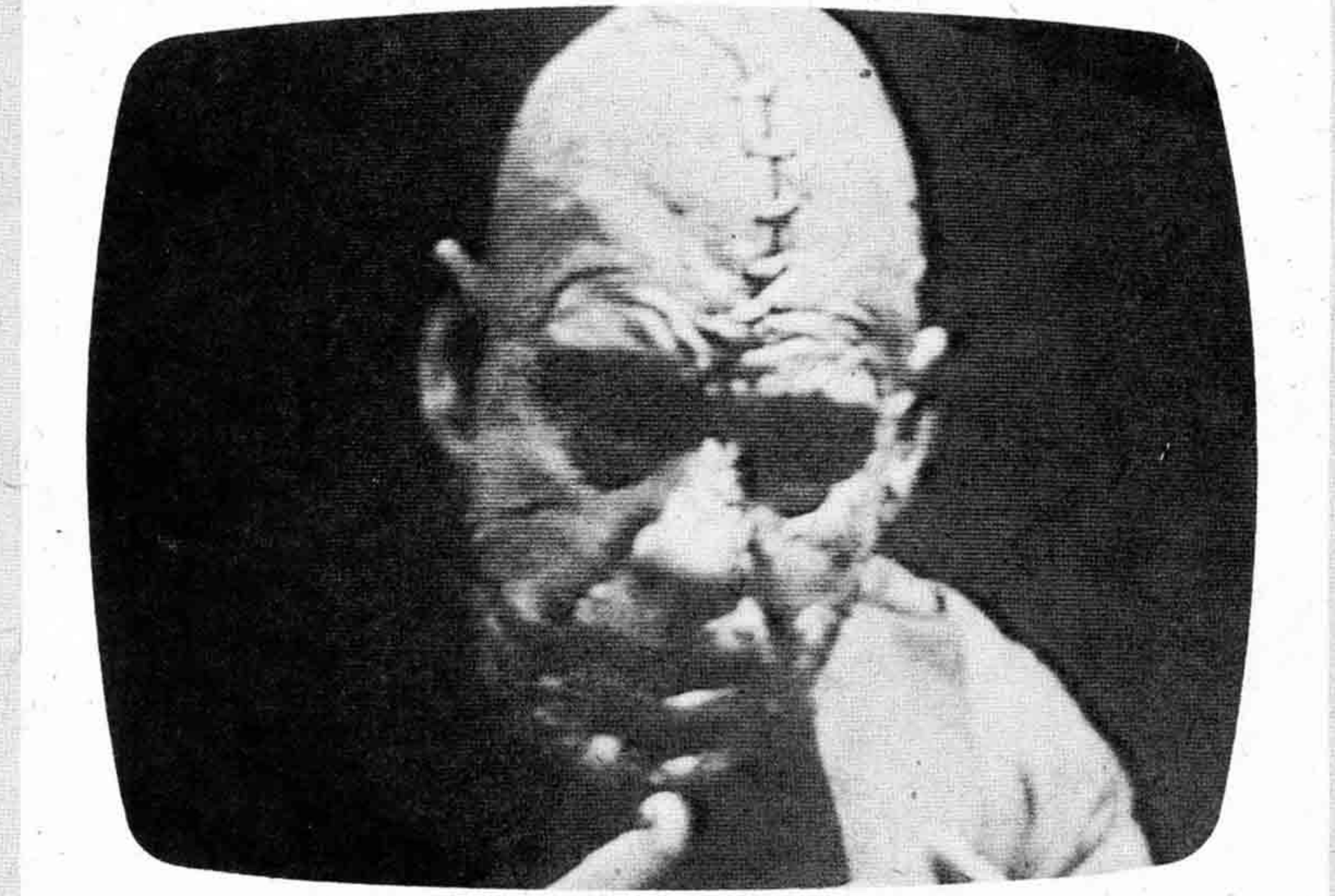


PHOTO: Starlog Video/Mossman-Williams Productions

Lon Chaney, Jr. in the *Tales of Tomorrow* "Frankenstein," broadcast January, 1952. John *(One Step Beyond)* Newland played Doctor Frankenstein.

PHOTO: Courtesy of Theodore Sturgeon

"Bright Segment" was adapted for French TV and Sturgeon calls it the most faithful.

row. I was the story department."

A series which is only beginning to come under rediscovery and reevaluation, *Tales* ran from 1951 to 1953. Included in its shows were a Lon Chaney Jr. television of *Frankenstein* and a two-part adaptation of Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. "And if you really want to floor someone in a trivia contest," Sturgeon continues, "Ask them what the theme music for that first science fiction television production was. Believe it or not, we used *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, the same theme Kubrick picked up years later for *2001*."

Years of on-again, off-again involvement with television followed. Throughout this period Sturgeon wrote a variety of scripts for such programs as *The Wild Wild West* (for a particular episode which never got to the screen), and *The Invaders*. In fact, he also wrote a script for a Saturday morning children's show, *Land of the Lost*. Usually containing a variety of hurried-looking stop-motion dinosaurs, Sturgeon's particular *Land of the Lost* episode was titled "The Pylon Express," and ran during that series' first season in 1974.

Despite his involvement in the pictured medium of the airwaves, however, Sturgeon remains generally unhappy with the relationship. For example, he considers the 1972 ABC-TV movie of his classic short-story "Killdozer" a "disaster," and, although his name was on the credits, the script was heavily rewritten after it left Sturgeon's hands. "I've never done much in television. There was a lot of it then, as now, that I couldn't go along with. Television's never going to be my major outlet. I don't like the medium or the people who work in it, mostly. And I know of no other industry for which so little is paid for the raw material. A script is only a small, small amount of an episode's total budget." Is there anything that Sturgeon does like about television? "Yes," he answers, "and this holds true for films as well. In Hollywood there are experts, probably the finest experts on the entire earth, marvelous, hard-working people who are totally dedicated to their craft. These are the people who are in lighting and set designing, people who are grips and costume designers, people who've been in and around films on the heels of their fathers and mothers, who were also in and around films. Some of them are even third generation experts, and they are *good* at what they do. But it's the other Hollywood folk that I don't particularly care for."

"One happy exception," Sturgeon continues, "was my association with Gene Roddenberry and *Star Trek* back in the 1960's. People now seem to feel that democracy, sexual, ethnic and political equality are corny, but those are some of the things Roddenberry believes in, and I respect him for that. *Star Trek* was a very pleasant experience for me. I think it was what Gene was as a man and producer and what I am as a man and writer that was primarily responsible for that respect." Whatever the reasons, Sturgeon's *Trek* contributions remain among the most popular episodes of that long-dead series. In the first Sturgeon-segment, "Shore Leave," the Enterprise crew found themselves on a pleasure planet, where thought became instant reality; unfortunately, those thoughts soon became murderously dangerous. Many fans also recall Sturgeon's "Amok Time" episode, where Spock went into a sort of ritualized heat and had to return to his native Vulcan to mate or die.

One little-known incident about that segment concerns one of the most quoted lines in the series. "I happened to be on the Paramount lot when they were doing the paste-up of 'Amok Time,' " Sturgeon recalls. "A paste-up is when the episode is just glued together, with no music and no sound effects. Anyway, they ran the episode through in the screening room, and I was waiting for a certain line of Spock's that I had written. In the story, Spock, as far as he knows having killed his captain in a battle over a princess, then turns the princess over to the rival he was battling for her in the first place. Spock then says to his rival, 'You can have her. After a time, however, you may find that having is not so pleasing a thing as wanting.' I'm immensely proud of that line, and it was also crucial to the entire plot of that *Star Trek* episode. To say nothing of being a particularly beautiful and quotable piece of dialogue. There's not a *Star Trek* fan in America who can't quote that line."

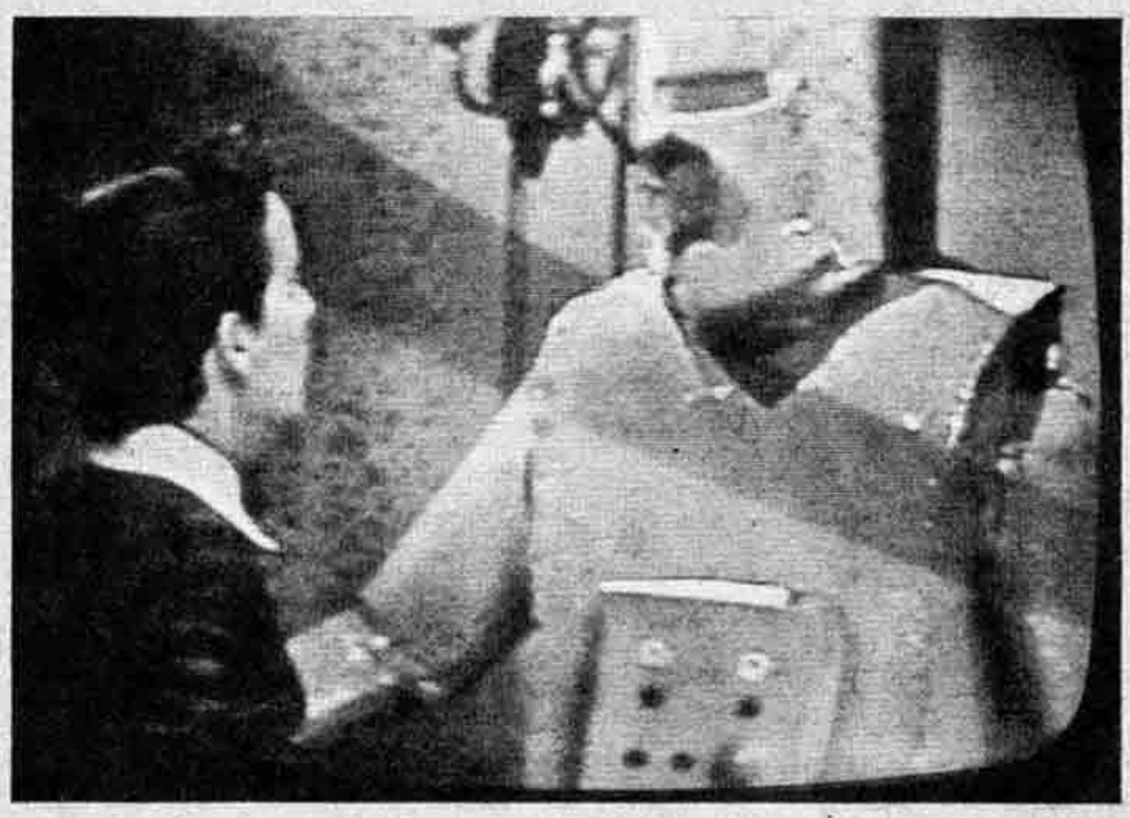
"Anyway, they ran this episode through the screening room and the line wasn't

PHOTO: © 1980 NBC Television

Sturgeon even wrote for Saturday morning's Land of the Lost series.

PHOTO: © 1980 ABC Television

ABC's The Invaders also received a script during its brief run.



PHOTOS: Starlog Video/Mosman-Williams Productions

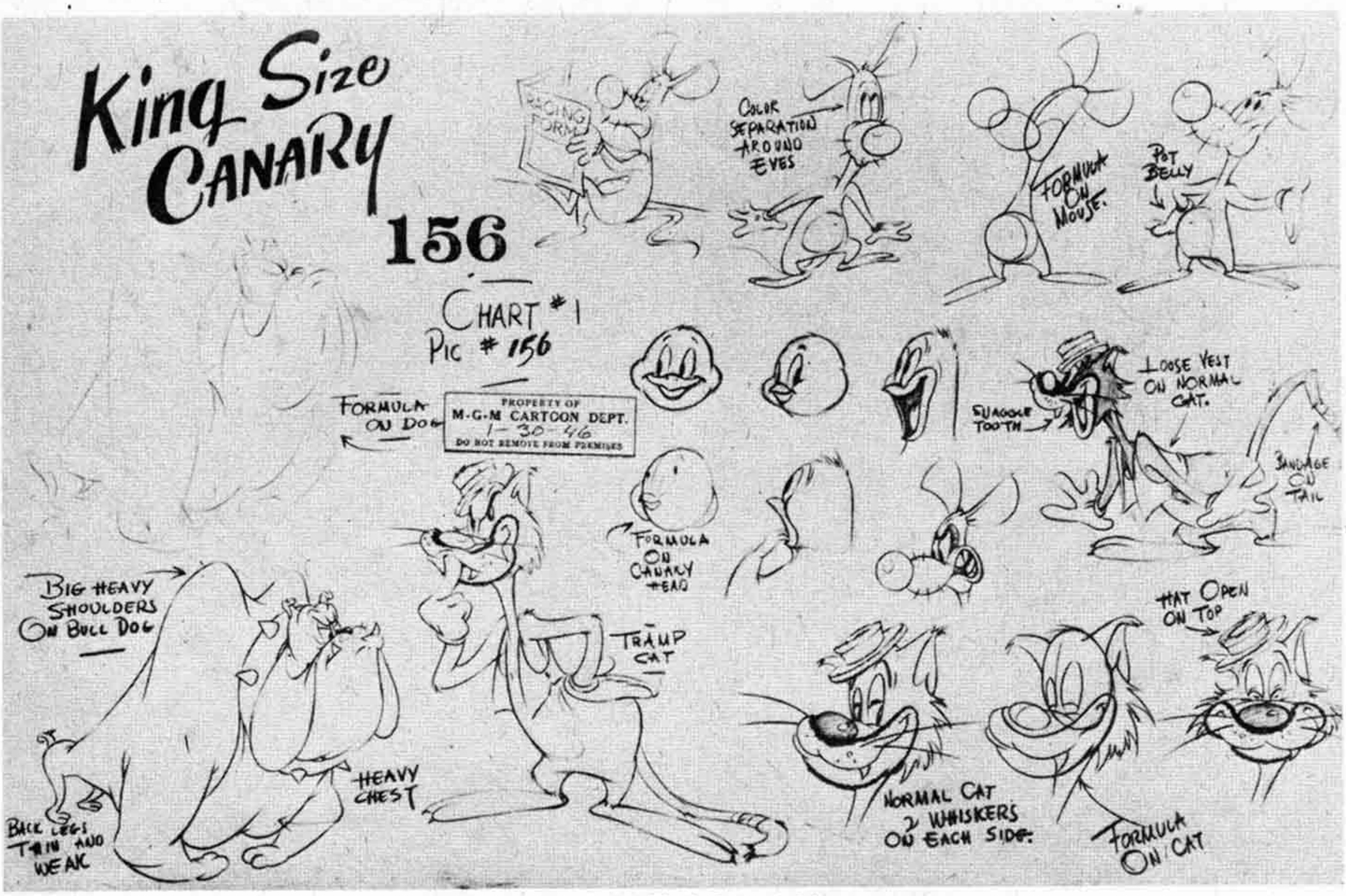
Some highlights from *Tales of Tomorrow*. Top, left and right: In "The Tomb of King Tarus" three explorers and the secret of eternal life. Bottom left: Frankenstein compares mugs with a young actor. Bottom right: Passion wells in the heart of a robot in "Read to Me, Herr Doctor."

there. It was gone. Now, usually, I'm a very quiet and unaggressive person. I don't like to make trouble. But this time, I just flipped out. I went roaring down to Bob Justman's office, *Star Trek*'s executive producer at the time, and I just raised hell. After a little while he gradually began to understand what I was saying and he jumped up and said, "Come with me." We went right down to the cutting room where they were cutting my episode. After some judicious trimming on the editor's part that line was reinserted. Without going into the details, I soon realized that they had not made that cut on purpose. They didn't cut it because they hated me or disliked my writing. They did it because they had their noses so close to the work they couldn't see they were destroying the crucial point of the narrative. I still have fond memories of my *Star Trek* days; that's why *Star Trek—The Motion Picture* was such a nostalgic experience for me."

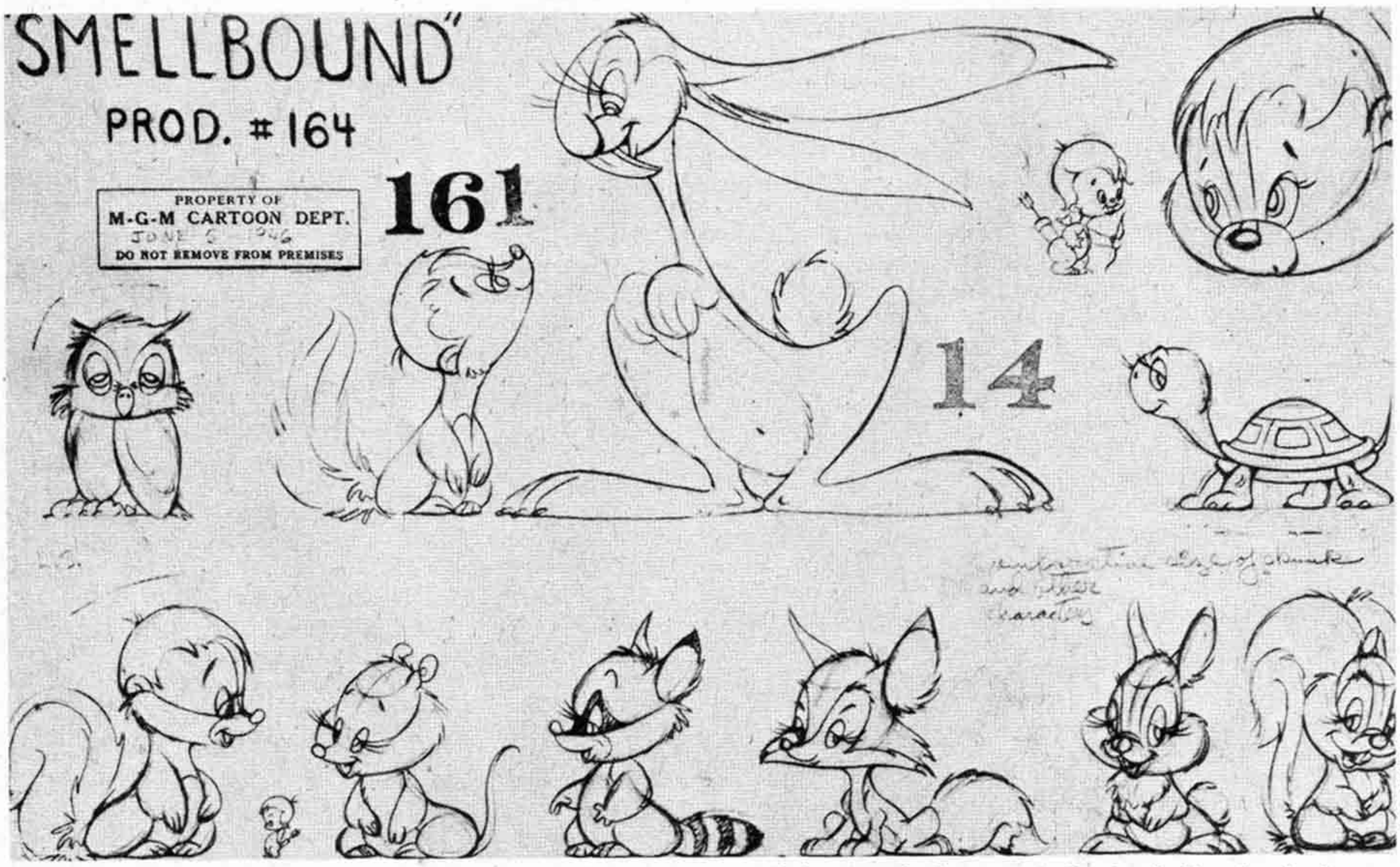
Yet Sturgeon's best television experience never occurred in this country. In 1974, a series titled *Des Histories Insolites* was broadcast on French TV, and, in November of that year, the series unveiled a 55 minute color adaptation of Sturgeon's short story "Bright Segment." "Parcelle Brillante," as it was known in French, starred Gert (*Goldfinger*) Froebe and Juliet Berto, and was directed by Christian de Chalonge. The film—concerning a retarded handyman who nurses a knifing victim back to life—was absolutely faithful to Sturgeon's original story, for which he was extremely pleased. "To my astonishment, I found that "Parcelle Brillante" had been shot exactly as I wrote it," Sturgeon says. "Even better, it was made into a fine film. It's a good example of what happens when a sensitive director really knows how to translate the written word into film. I think de Chalonge did an absolutely brilliant job." One can only hope that some day Americans will be allowed to view the product, of which Sturgeon explains "... is ninety-two per-cent visual. There is French dialogue in it, but so little that it doesn't matter."

What about theatrical films? For years, Hollywood has been attempting to transfer Sturgeon's *More Than Human* to the screen. Perhaps the most interesting story surrounding these attempts involved Orson Welles, one of the cinema's greatest living legends. "Back in 1969, I did a screenplay and two complete revisions on *More Than Human* in 28 days for Orson, who was going to direct. It was an insane piece of work ... just incredible. We worked so hard ..." Then why wasn't the film ever made? "The company we were working for blew apart," Sturgeon replies. "Since that time a number of other people have approached me with the idea of translating *More Than Human* onto film, including a well-known French director. But I always proceed with extreme caution concerning that book. There are certain qualities in *More Than Human* which have made it go into 18 languages around the world, and if it ever gets to the screen. I want those qualities to remain intact. I don't want anyone—producer, director, screenwriter—to take those elements out. So I'll never leap to close any deals until I'm absolutely certain that the people I'm dealing with will be able to do what I expect from them."

Audiences across the globe can only agree with Sturgeon's sentiments. And after reading any one of his brilliant novels or short stories, we can also hope that, in a career punctuated by a participation in every possible form of the communication arts, that we will be further enriched by new examples, in film and television, of the artistry of Theodore Sturgeon.



The model sheet for "King Size Canary" only hints at the film's frenzied humor.



"Smellbound" (retitled "Little 'Tinker" prior to release) concerned the sexual adventures of a skunk. Despite the funny animals, its humor was aimed mainly at adults.

Tex Avery: A Legacy of Laughter

1908-1980

By STEVE SCHNEIDER

Fred "Tex" Avery, the pioneer film animator and innovator in whose cartoons Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck made their debuts, died of cancer August 25, at Saint Joseph's Medical Center in Burbank, California. He was 72 years old.

During a career that spanned nearly five decades of directing animated theatrical shorts and commercials for television, Avery provided the first real cartoon alternative to the Disney Studio's dominant approach. Whereas Disney and company stressed caricatured realism and straightforward narrative, Avery sought the wholesale destruction of cartoon conventions by benignly dictating over a world in which the impossible became permissable—and often hilarious.

Born in Taylor, Texas in 1908, Avery migrated to Hollywood in 1929 to pursue an early interest in cartooning. He first worked as an animator at the Walter Lantz Studio in the early 30's, and claimed to have directed two films while in residence there, though no screen credits exist to that effect. When word came around of an opening in the direction department at Leon Schlesinger Productions, whose "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" series were released through Warner Bros., Avery applied and was quickly hired for the post.

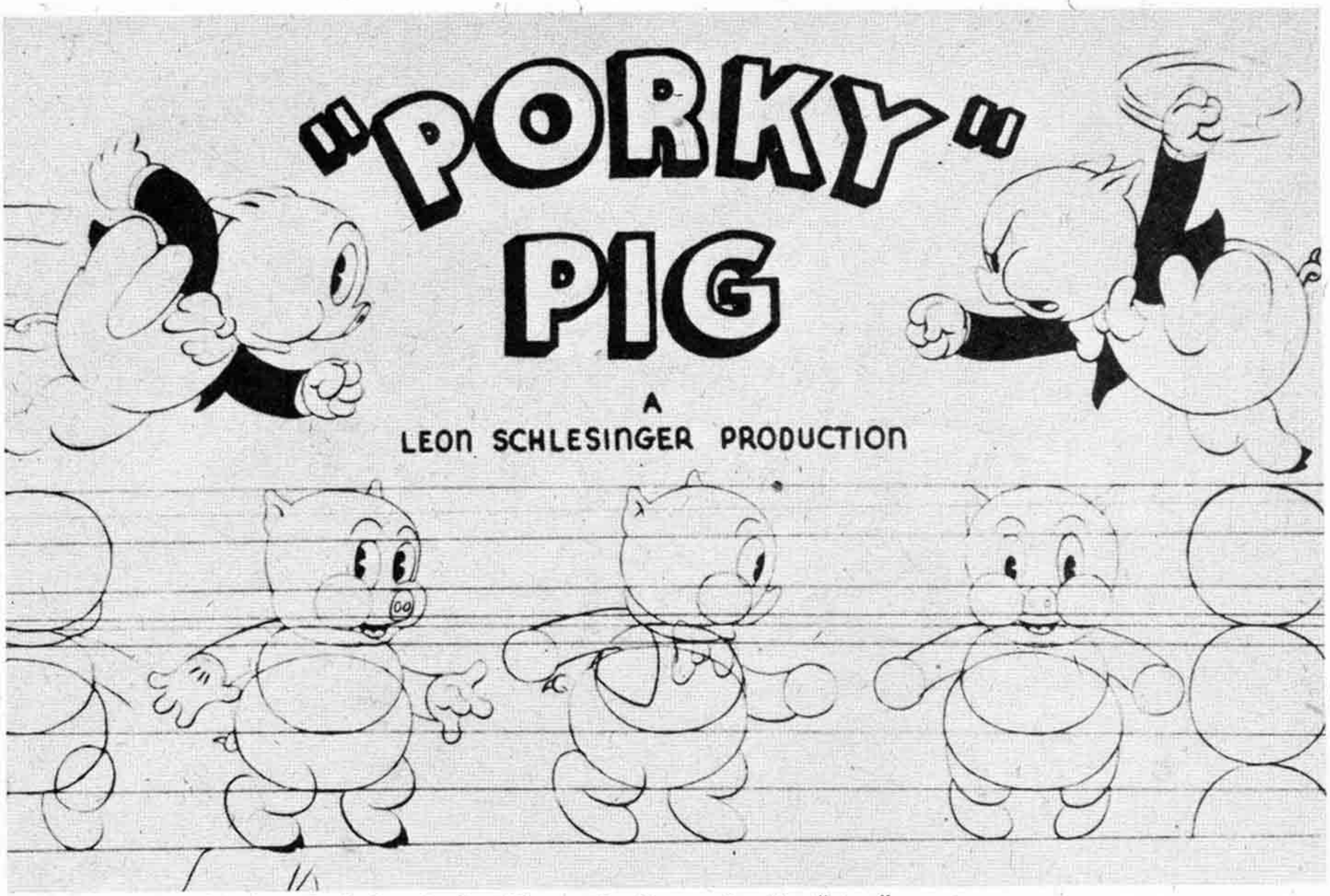
In his work at the Schlesinger Studio, beginning in 1935, Avery developed the obsessively inventive, rapid-fire directing style that was to transform the animated short-subject field within the succeeding few years. From the first, he was put in league with some very able allies. As he explained to Joe Adamson for the critical study *Tex Avery: King of Cartoons* (Popular Library, 1975, Out of Print), Schlesinger said: "I've got some boys here—they're not renegades, but they don't get along with the other two crews. They're not satisfied working with the people they're working with." These "boys" were the very young Bob Clampett and Chuck Jones, who in later years went on to become the shining stars of the Warner staff.

With Clampett and Jones as principal animators, Avery established his unit (there were then two or three other units headed by other directors at Schlesinger's, each of which was responsible for their own cartoons) in a shaky, dubiously-hygienic shack that was "completely separated from the Schlesinger Studio", and which was immediately dubbed "Termite Terrace." Recollected Avery, Schlesinger "was smart; he didn't disturb us. We were all alone out there, and he knew nothing of what went on."

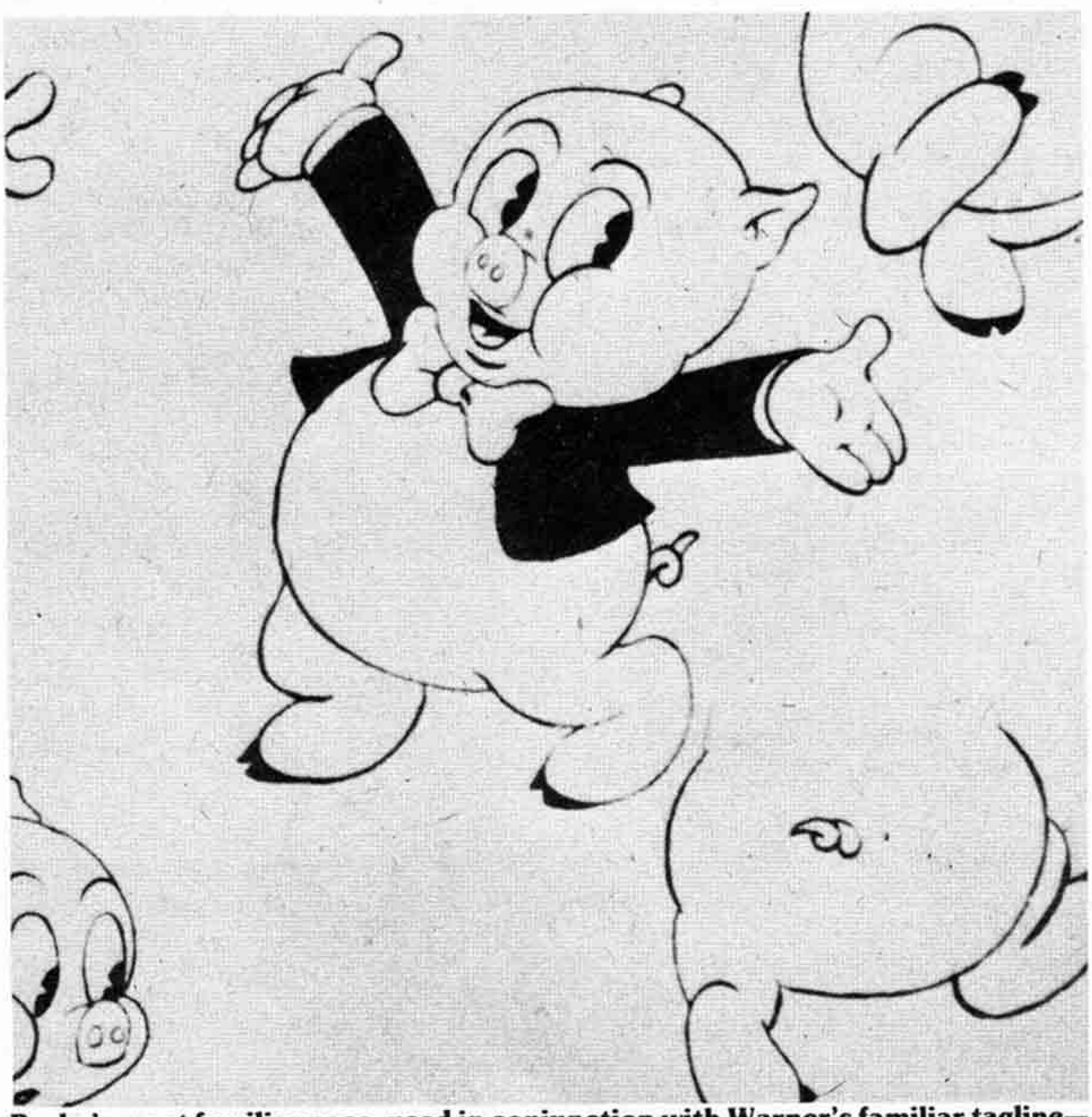
Avery's first cartoons mostly featured a plump and primitive Porky Pig, who had premiered a year earlier in a spoof of Hal Roach's popular "Our Gang" series, entitled *I Haven't Got A Hat*. These early films are fledging words, with tempos that are sometimes agonizingly slow, characterizations that are often facile and insubstantial, and humor that is frequently flaccid and predictable. Yet soon a spark of a different sort began to show.

In 1937, Avery cast his pig thespian as an outdoorsman for *Porky's Duck Hunt*, and pitted him against a character that was without precedent in the annals of animation. Finally, the Tunes had become legitimately Looney: a little black duck does crazy things for no apparent purpose, delighting in his dementia and maintaining a pace no live-action counterpart could ever compete with. Fittingly, the Duck was christened Daffy, and quickly jumped to star status within the Studio.

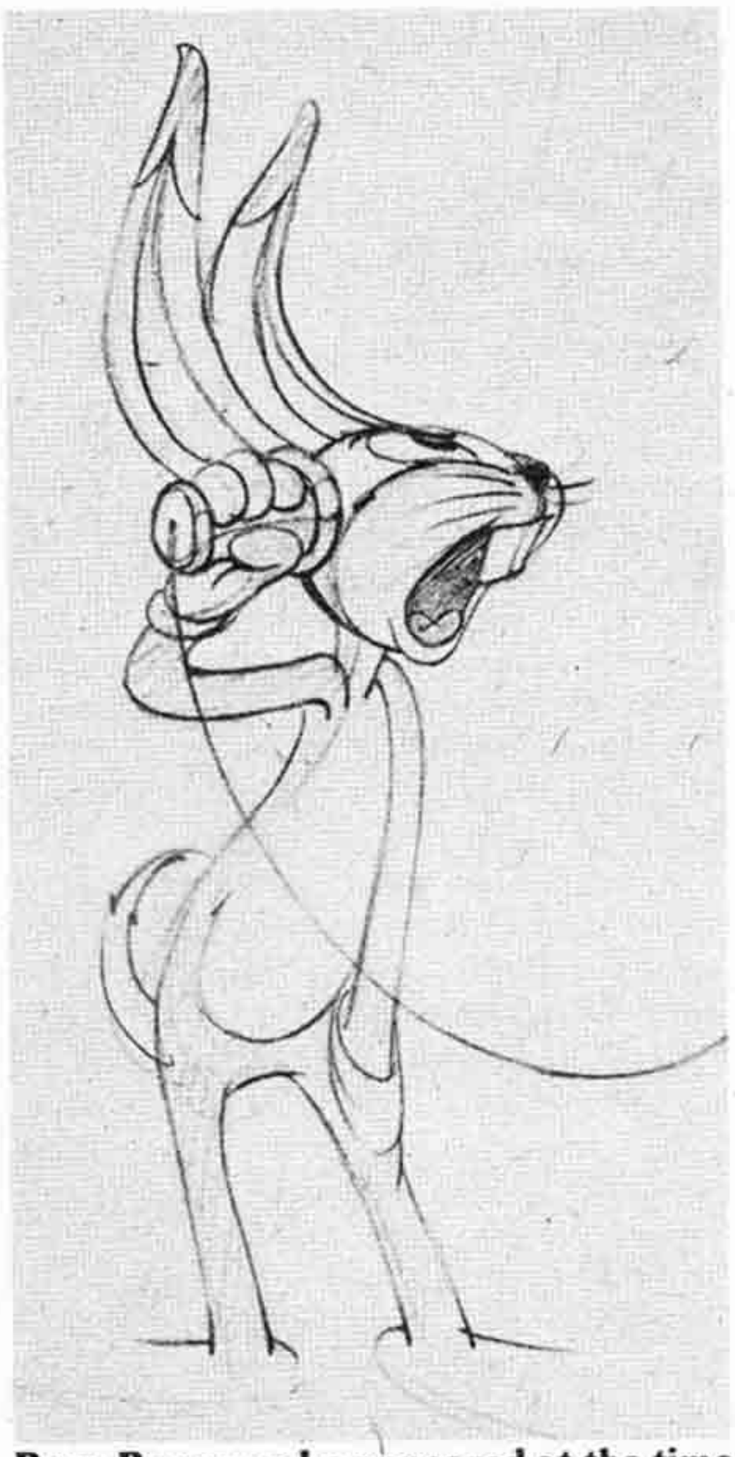
For some time, other directors at Schlesinger's had been experimenting with rabbit-hunt cartoons, with varying degrees of success. When it was Avery's turn to try his hand at this emerging tradition, he upgraded the rabbit into a street-smart wise ass of the first order, redesigned him visually, and had voice-artist Mel Blanc slap him with his distinctive, Brooklynese voice. Present in the finished film, *A Wild Hare* (1940), are all of the characteristics that soon certified a 'scewy wabbit' named Bugs Bunny as *the* class act of cartoondom—brashness, irreverence, and a dis-



An Avery-era model sheet depicting the first Warner Brothers animation "star."



Porky's most familiar pose, used in conjunction with Warner's familiar tagline—"That's All, Folks!"



Bugs Bunny as he appeared at the time of Avery's dominion over the Warner Animation unit.

tinct sense of foul play. Moreover, in this film, one of Avery's pet phrases, "What's up, Doc?", was given to the rabbit, and soon became part of the American dialect.

Avery made three more Bugs Bunnys before he left Schlesinger's, including the classic *Tortoise Beats Hare* (1941), which inspired two other variants on the same theme by other directors in later years. The title character in *The Crackpot Quail* (1941) was also featured in later cartoons at Warner Bros. But Avery's innovations were by no means limited to character creation: he directed a number of mock-travelogues and spot-gag cartoons that were the first animated films to employ an offscreen narrator; elaborate Art-Deco stylings figured prominently into 1936's *Page Miss Glory;* elements that can only be called surreal were gradually made acceptable to the Hollywood Cartoon community; and characterization and down-to-the-frame timing were refined to new levels of sophistication. Yet the distinct visual signature that became the hallmark of his later work is present only in germinal form through Avery's six years with Schlesinger.

Avery left Schlesinger's in 1941, and began directing shorts for the MGM cartoon department in the same year. He was relatively unsuccessful at developing continuing characters for MGM, achieving only modest popularity with the poker-faced Droopy Dog, who first bowed in 1943's *Dumb Hounded.* Avery featured the overly obnoxious Screwy Squirrel in a handful of films, beginning with *Screwball Squirrel* (1944), but quickly realized that this was a losing venture, and actually had the character killed off in the last of the series (*Lonesome Lenny*, 1946). Two bears named George and Junior (Avery seemed to have a real weakness for Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*) flourished in a run of four films in the early 40's, but never really caught on.

At MGM, Avery's strengths became apparent in the cartoons that had no star players; in these films, he was no longer obliged to temper his humor to meet the demands of a particular character; his imagination could go where inspiration would lead it. During this period, Avery cultivated a style marked by furiously quick pacing, exhorbitant exaggeration, broad-as-a-barn slapstick, and constant verbal and visual reference to the fact that what was on the screen was an animated cartoon. Some of the throwaway gags that littered his films have achieved classic status: in a forest, two hunters chase a duck past a point where both they and their world turn black and white: researching this, they find a tiny sign in the scenery that warns: "Technicolor Ends Here" (*Lucky Ducky,* 1948); a human hair appears to fall into the motion-picture projector and flickers spasmodically on screen, until one of the cartoon characters interrupts his dialogue to reach out and remove it (*The Magical Maestro,* 1952); a misanthropic pussycat is attacked by a pencil sharpener, sirens, scissors, and even lipstick, among others (*The Cat That Hated People*, 1948). Among the masterpieces directed by Avery during his tenure at MGM, none seems to have garnered quite the same adulation as 1947's *King-Size Canary*, in which a quartet of small, domestic animals literally dwarf the entire planet in their pursuit of one another.

If Avery was given to overstatement, none of his films were quite so lavishly overstated as those whose central concern was sex. In a series of films including *Red Hot Riding Hood* (1943), *Wild and Wooley* (1945), *Swing Shift Cinderella* (1945), and *Little Rural Riding Hood* (1949), Avery's characters display a sexual frenzy that would have lowered Mickey Mouse's voice by several octaves. The oversexed skunk in *Little 'Tinker* (1948) makes Chuck Jones' funny Pepe le Pew seem positively prepubescent.

Avery concluded his theatrical film career by returning to the Walter Lantz Studio in 1954 and directing four shorts that towered above anything else that studio was then releasing. Later work for television included direction of the highly acclaimed "Raid" insecticide commercials and Lay's Frito Bandito in the early 60s.

In stark contrast to the bravado and boisterousness of his characters, Avery was a genuinely self-effacing man, shunning the mounting critical and popular reknown his work has begun to enjoy. He never honored requests to appear at celebrations of his work held by cinema festivals or animation societies, and refused to attend a week-long tribute by New York's Museum of Modern Art.

The legacy of Tex Avery is a rich and varied one, and the site of much undeniable humor. His art was nurtured by an irrepressible spirit that rejoiced in creating something never before known. But he never stopped working and spent the last two years of his life developing stories and characters for the Hanna-Barbera Studio. The greatest tribute to Tex Avery's talent is our continued laughter—a tribute guaranteed to be an eternal one.

Memories of Tex Avery

When I went to work on the very first Warner Brothers "Merrie Melodie" in early 1931 with Harman, Ising and Freleng there was a pervading sense of excitement as if we were just starting out on a great adventure exploring the unlimited possibilities of the animated sound cartoon. These early "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" seemed fresh and innovative.

But, by 1935 a certain staleness and predictability in the use and reuse of the same general story formats and gags had set in. It was as if a hard crust had formed over the creative process, and those of us that suggested newer, wackier ideas felt as if we were hitting our head against a stone wall.

It was at this propitious moment that Tex Avery came on the scene. I had the good fortune to be sent with Tex to help him start a new cartoon unit in the middle of the Warner lot in a little wooden building which we promptly christened "Termite Terrace."

As I said in a magazine interview over 11 years ago: "Tex was a great story man and a great gag man. He's even funnier than his pictures. He's very likeable personally and . . . a great innovator. I was supposed to help Tex with his stories. He'd almost always originate the angle himself, and then he and I would work together gagging the stories. Tex directed. I would sometimes help him with the layouts, and then animate. Tex's first cartoons were all funny, and all good."

Tex immediately begin probing for soft spots in the hard crust, and then led the breakthrough that eventually changed the style and content of the Warner cartoon. To those of us who poured through the breach with him it will remain one of the most exhilarating and cherished memories of our lifetime.

His influence eventually spread throughout the cartoon industry, and today when his MGM cartoons are shown over British Television they are not listed in the TV guide by title, characters or studio as are most other shorts, but as "A Tex Avery Cartoon." And I am told by friends in England that next to Walt Disney he has now become the best known cartoonist.

Hopefully, his fame will continue to spread throughout the world for all time.

Bob Clampett

Screwy Squirrel, Avery's maniac rhodent, judged too abrasive.

At long last!

The final exciting chapter in the continuing saga of

THE GREAT ANIMATED APES

Part III: Mighty Joe Young

By PAUL MANDELL

Of the hundreds of fantasy films that flow out of Los Angeles every year, there are few that prove to be virtually hate-proof. (We say "virtually" only to counter the few cynics, spoil-sports and nay-sayers who might disagree.) One of these chosen few is *The Wizard of Oz*; several of Disney's early animated features might also qualify; and then there is *Mighty Joe Young*. With all due respect to the Tin Man, you have to be missing a heart not to love this film. Its technical ingenuity speaks for itself, and although the film asks you to accept the existence of a young girl's pet gorilla who just happens to be 10 feet tall, no one is insulting your intelligence. For when all is said and done, *Mighty Joe Young* is a fairy tale—an outrageous one, perhaps, but a fairy tale nonetheless. One could easily write off the entire premise as ridiculous, that an enormous ape could only be tranquilized by his young mistress's rendition of *Beautiful Dreamer*, be it whistled or played on the grand piano. Or that the ape is humanoid and intelligent enough to rescue a baby from the ledge of a blazing orphanage. Yet, somehow, through the miracle of its production, it all works without embarrassment. Only Merian C. Cooper would have had the chutzpah to concoct and produce it for the whopping sum of $2.5 million (uninflated) in 1949.

Like *King Kong*, *Joe* was Cooper's brainchild. Although it didn's score as expected at the box office, few can deny that Cooper succeeded in his intention—to bring to the screen a tale of excitement and adventure with a warm, happy ending, rather than another tale of terror. Critics of the day found it easy to call *Joe* "*King Kong* for children." The two films inevitably invite comparison by virtue of technique, and although *Joe* was a serio-comic attempt to recapture the lost glories of *King Kong*, the comparison is really a shallow one. Stripped to its essentials, *Mighty Joe Young* was Cooper's vision, Willis O'Brien's design and (for the most part) Harryhausen's spectacular animation. The combination of talent remains one that Hollywood will never see the

likes of again.

Just as *Kong* emerged as a way of beating the Depression blues by some strange audience identification, *Mighty Joe* seemed to generate out of the relief spurred on by the ending of World War II. The war had taken its toll, and the men behind *Kong* were not immune. Merian Cooper emerged as a brigadier-general, physically and mentally sound. Others weren't so lucky. Director E.B. Schoedsack's eyesight was severely impaired during a high-altitude test flight, an accident that left him frustrated and bitter. Matte painter Mario Larrinaga sought to divorce himself from the motion-picture business. For Willis O'Brien, times were rough. It's been said that he had to smuggle a matte painting past the pickets at RKO when a strike was on, out of economic necessity.

Forming the "Joe" Team

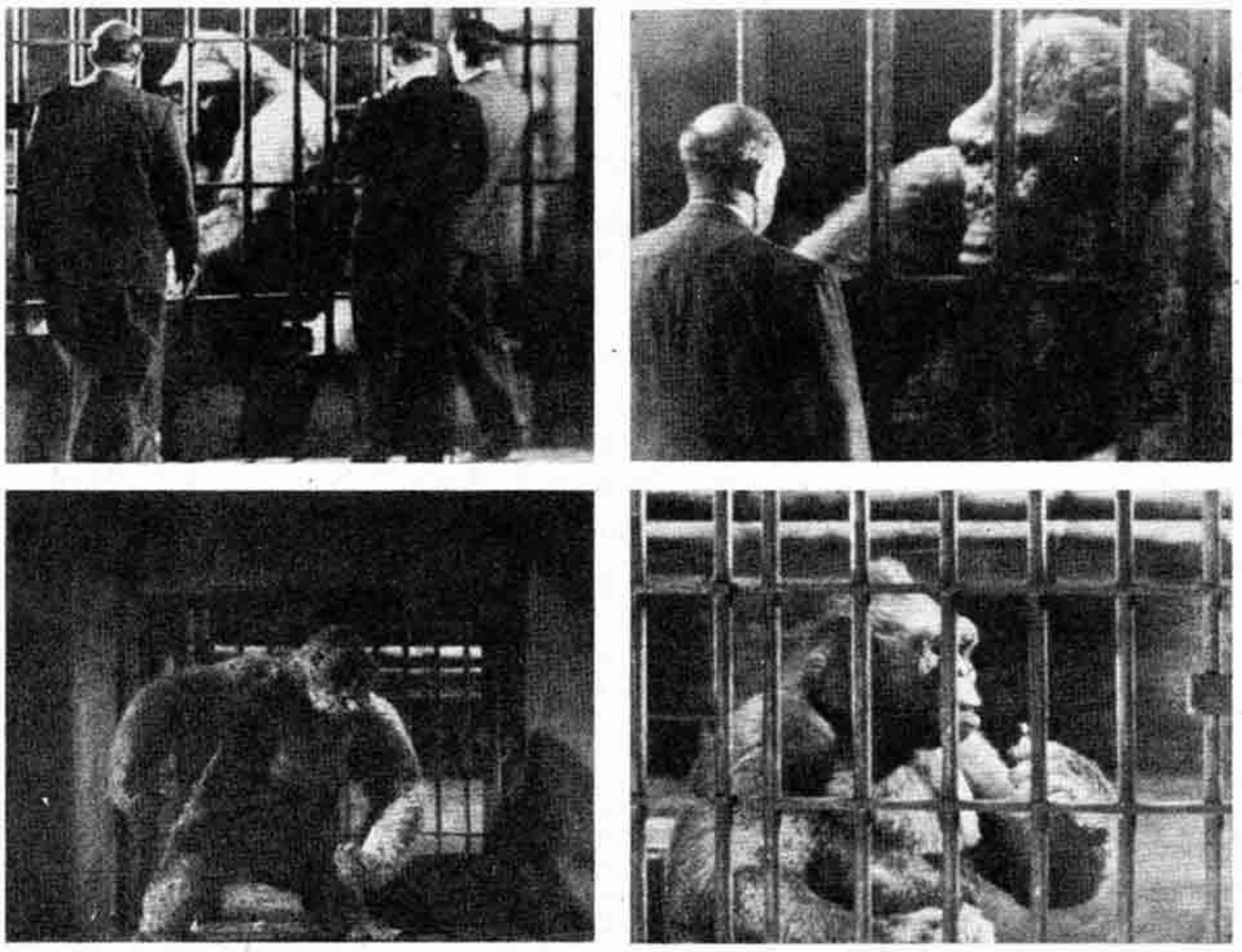
Restless, Cooper decided to reteam with Schoedsack and O'Brien in 1946 and film *Mr. Joseph Young of Africa*, the original title of the Ruth Rose screenplay based on Cooper's idea. Ostensibly, the stop-motion gorilla was a character Cooper could not disengage himself from after *Kong*'s huge success. He knew it would be futile to invite a remake at that time, and a sequel had already proven to be a dismal failure. Rather than attempt to top *Kong*, he chose to burlesque the rigidity of the main idea, even to the extent of making Carl Denham—in *Kong*, Cooper's filmic alter ego—a broad parody of himself in the character of Max O'Hara. Robert Armstrong played O'Hara as the penultimate ham. Denham's motto may have been "Make it bigger," but O'Hara's slogan was "It isn't big enough."

Mighty Joe Yong was produced by Cooper and John Ford under the banner of Argosy Pictures for RKO. The two had formed Argosy back in 1937 when disputes arose with Selznick-International over the production of *Stagecoach*. Ford would later disclaim any credit for *Joe*, as it was out of his genre and in all probability embarrassed him, thematically and financially. But if anyone was grateful for Ford's peripheral involvement, it was Ben Johnson. A virtually unknown cowboy-stuntman, Johnson was doubling for Henry Fonda in Ford's *Fort Apache* when a team of horses got out of control and tipped over a wagon, trapping the actors beneath it. Johnson acted quickly and managed to upright the vehicle. As a reward, director Ford gave him an acting contract with the promise of a principle role in the next Argosy picture.

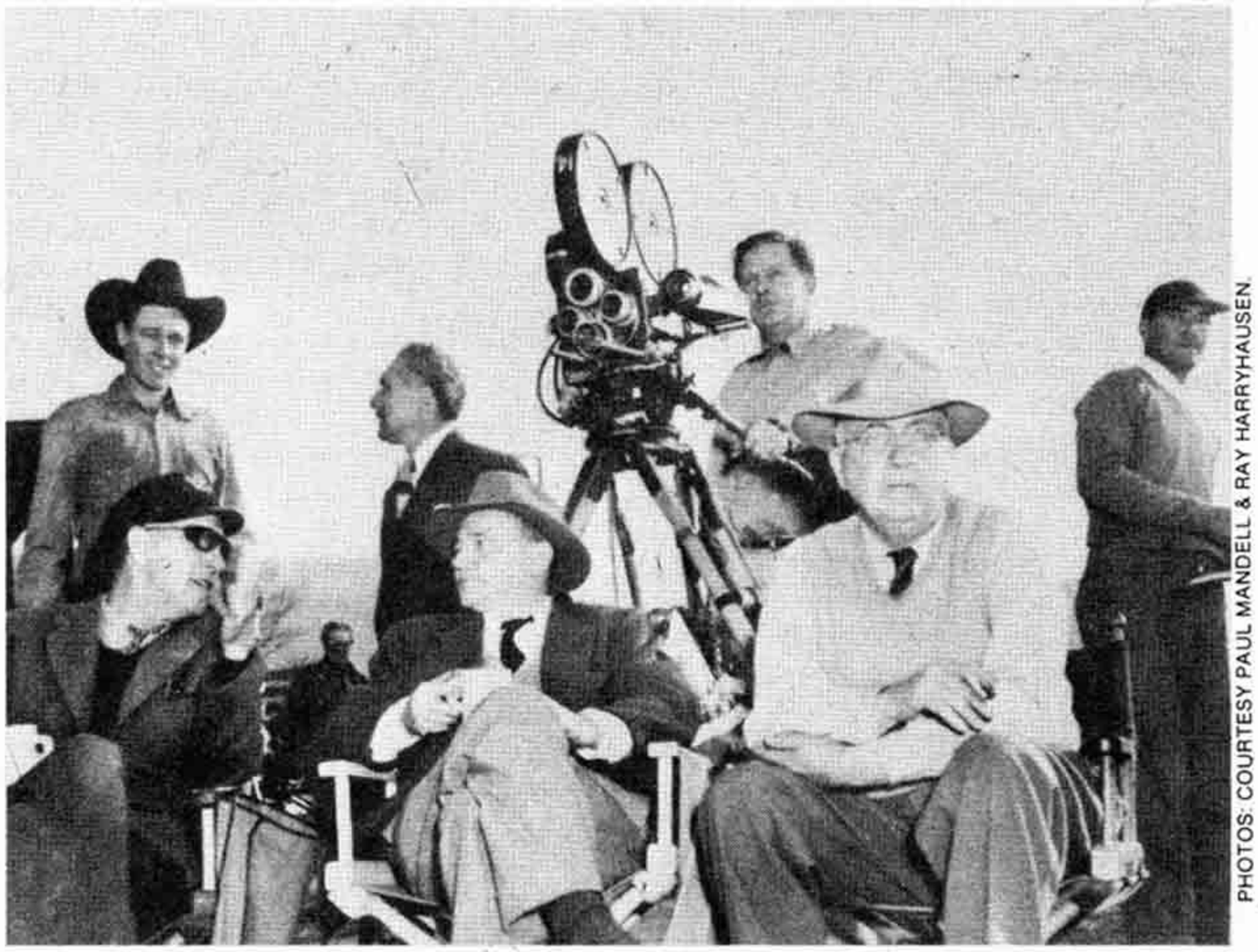
Johnson reaped his prize in *Joe*. Retaining his last name, he portrayed Greg Johnson as the droll but suitable hero to Terry Moore. Another actress had been cast as Jill Young, but Cooper spotted Moore in a Columbia picture and insisted she be screen-tested for *Joe*. The other actress was eventually dropped, and Moore got the part. In supporting roles were Frank McHugh and Windy, who served as counterpoint to Armstrong's hammy spiels: Regis Toomey in a prologue appearance as Jill's father; and Dennis Green as Crawford, the suave expeditioner.

Willis O'Brien returned to the dusty RKO-Pathe lot in Culver City, where just five years earlier he was forced to abandon one of his set projects, *Gwangi*. Here, under the roof of Stage One, he organized a large and capable effects team. Marcel Delgado was the natural choice for chief model maker and sculptor of Joe Young, and Fitch Fulton, the prominent RKO matte artist who mastered the glass paintings for *Gone with the Wind*, selected a group of artists who more or less functioned as a separate effects unit. Abundant use of glass art provided *Joe* with the storybook quality Cooper desired. Twenty-five of them were used, in conjunction with miniature rear-projection.

"O'Bie" was exuberant. He sketched with a passion and designed all the effects to accommodate paintings, projections and miniatures. However, as preproduction progressed, it became evident to all concerned that the requirements for such a mammoth production far exceeded the early expectations of Cooper and the RKO front office. The strain of coordinating and executing the work was of particular concern to Willis O'Brien who, although spry and chipper, was getting along in his years. As chief technician, he knew that he would need a competent first assistant to handle the bulk of the animation. O'Bie would animate a few



Four distinctive views of Mighty Joe Young as he languishes in his cage. The special effects for the film were an improvement over the earlier ape films and gave a young man named Harryhausen his first chance to break into films.



PHOTOS: COURTESY PAUL MANDELL & RAY HARRYHAUSEN.

Mighty Ben Johnson and the *Joe* crew in the background; upfront, left to right, are Schoedsack, Cooper and Willis O'Brien.

This production painting shows the attack the lions made against Joe. As usual, the girl is caught in the middle.

scenes, but his time was spent mostly at the drawing board.

A Young Admirer

During the preproduction phase of the ill-fated *War Eagles* at MGM, an 18-year-old admirer named Ray Harryhausen requested that O'Bie look at his work. An unfinished project called *Evolution* provided Harryhausen with enough sample footage to show his future mentor. Impressed, O'Bie remarked constructively that he should add character to his animals, a comment that stuck and helped improve Harryhausen's sculpture. When *Joe* evolved, he became O'Bie's prime consideration. Darlyne O'Brien took a liking to Harryhausen and suggested to O'Bie that his involvement would indeed be a welcome addition.

Needless to say, Harryhausen was overjoyed. He began by cutting mattes for O'Bie's drawings and sharpening his pencils; eventually, he obtained his union card. As it turned out, the incredible life-force Harryhausen gave *Joe*—his first feature-film character—points to some of the most fluid animation ever committed to film. With great humility and reverence to O'Brien, the young animator carried out his work silently and methodically, never seeking to put himself in the limelight. No one could have been more pleased when O'Bie received the effects Oscar for *Mighty Joe Young* in 1950.

Ruth Rose's script went through the revision mill as the preproduction progressed. Several sequences were eliminated, and some of the comic quips had to be diluted to meet the standards of Hollywood's still-rigid Production Code. Script alterations continued right up until day one of principal photography in November of 1948. Rose's husband, E.B. Schoedsack, eased himself back into the director's chair, determined to overcome his failing vision. Cooper and an assistant director stationed themselves by his side whenever the camera rolled.

Meanwhile, Marcel Delgado put the finishing touches on the final model of Joe. As with Kong, the gorilla's shape and appearance garnered heavy criticism from production people who knew little about anthropoidal anatomy and objected to the model's pudginess. Delgado, after being put through the wringer four times, threatened to walk if his sculpture was again ruled unacceptable. Finally, they yielded. The firm required that three different sizes of the Joe miniature be built, with duplications to keep several set-ups busy at the same time. Delgado and Harryhausen designed the largest armature for the 18-inch model, which utilized hinge joints for certain areas. Four 18-inch models were made, along with a 12-inch model and a four-inch miniature used primarily for long shots in the tug-of-war sequence. Delgado was particularly fond of the small one, and remarked in his twilight years that "it worked like a watch." Actual tooling was done by Harry Cunningham, the now-legendary Hollywood machinist, who built the metal skeletons for approximately $1,300 a piece. There would be no "fur dance" on Joe as with *Kong* and *Son of Kong*. Taxidermist George Lofgren invented a process of applying unborn lamb's hide to Joe's foam-rubber muscles, which resisted the impresion of the animator's fingertips. Lofgren would later work with Harryhausen on several of his films, including *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*. In addition, Delgado created several miniature horses and lions, along with miniatures of the human characters in the film, for shots that required dimensional substitutions for projected images.

Indescribable Tricks

Exploring the trick work employed in *Mighty Joe Young* would require a volume of text. The array of grimaces and expressions Harryhausen gave Joe in his basement lair, each requiring microscopic moves, practically defy analysis. On the basis of those shots alone, one can forgive a less than knowledgeable person in the area of special effects for mistaking it for live action. Beginning in December 1947, with the drunk scene, Harryhausen, along with O'Bie and Pete Peterson, toiled for 14 months at RKO-Pathe. Five set-ups would often be prepared simultaneously. Peterson, a grip whom O'Bie befriended and schooled as an animator, was responsible for many of Joe's comical nuances, including all the scenes in the back of the getaway truck and several of Joe lifting Terry Moore on the piano platform. While it is true that Harryhausen accomplished 85 percent of the *surviving* animation, Peterson created numerous scenes that were not used in the film, often duplicating one of Harryhausen's shots taken from a different point of view. Peterson's work is remarkable when one considers his affliction with multiple sclerosis, a disease that took its toll after his animation of *The Giant Behemoth* in 1958. But in the final analysis, the majority of scenes that shine through are due entirely to Harryhausen's handiwork. The first scene of Joe thumping his chest furiously by the lion cage—a clever combination of animation, matted water, rear- and front-projection, miniature set and glass painting—is a classic ex-

(continued on page 66)

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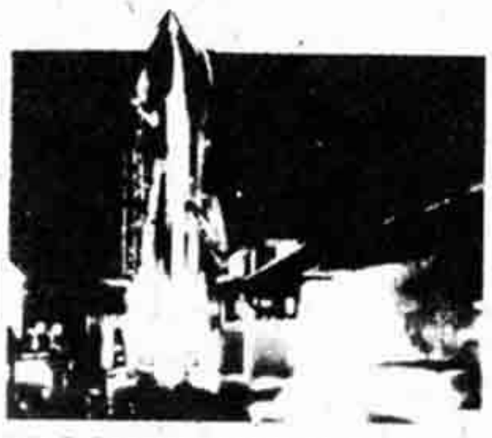

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"INVADERS FROM MARS"

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"TALES OF TOMORROW" Vol. 1 (3 episodes)

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"THE FLYING SAUCER"

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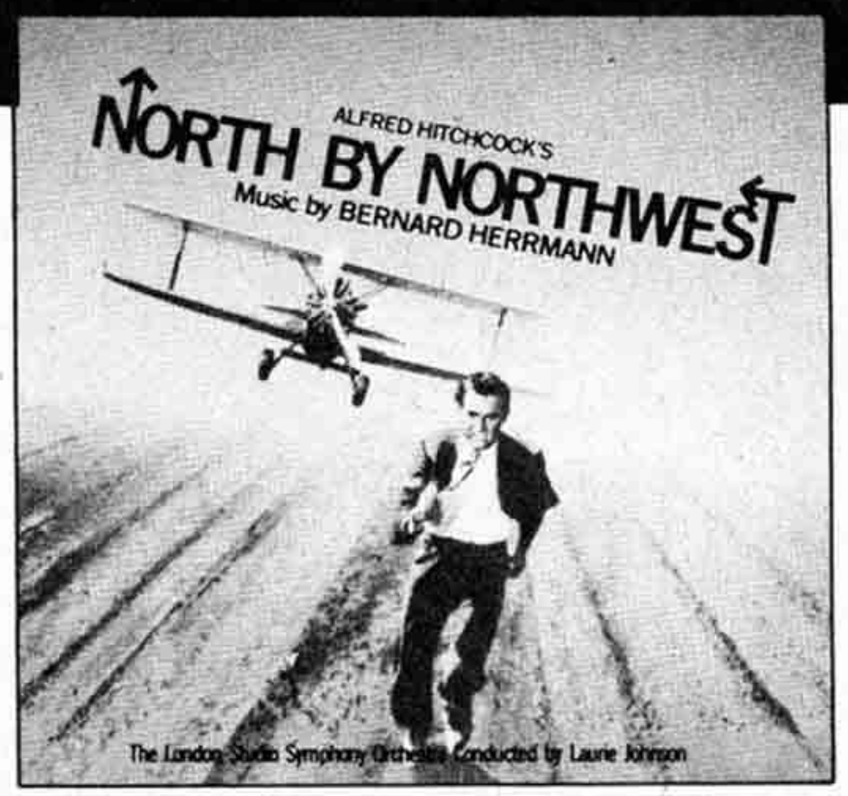
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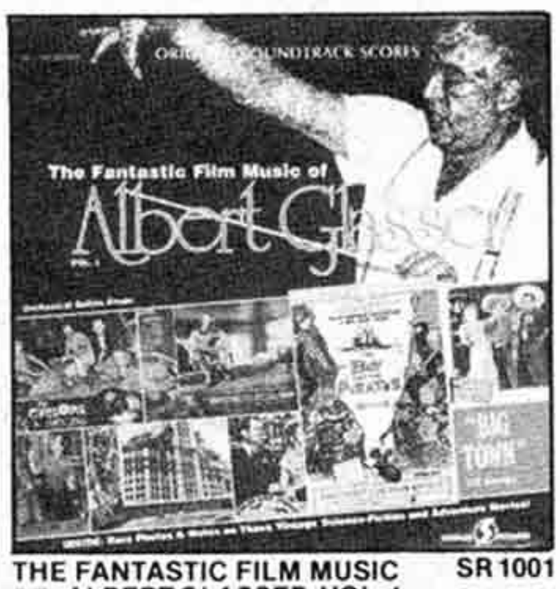

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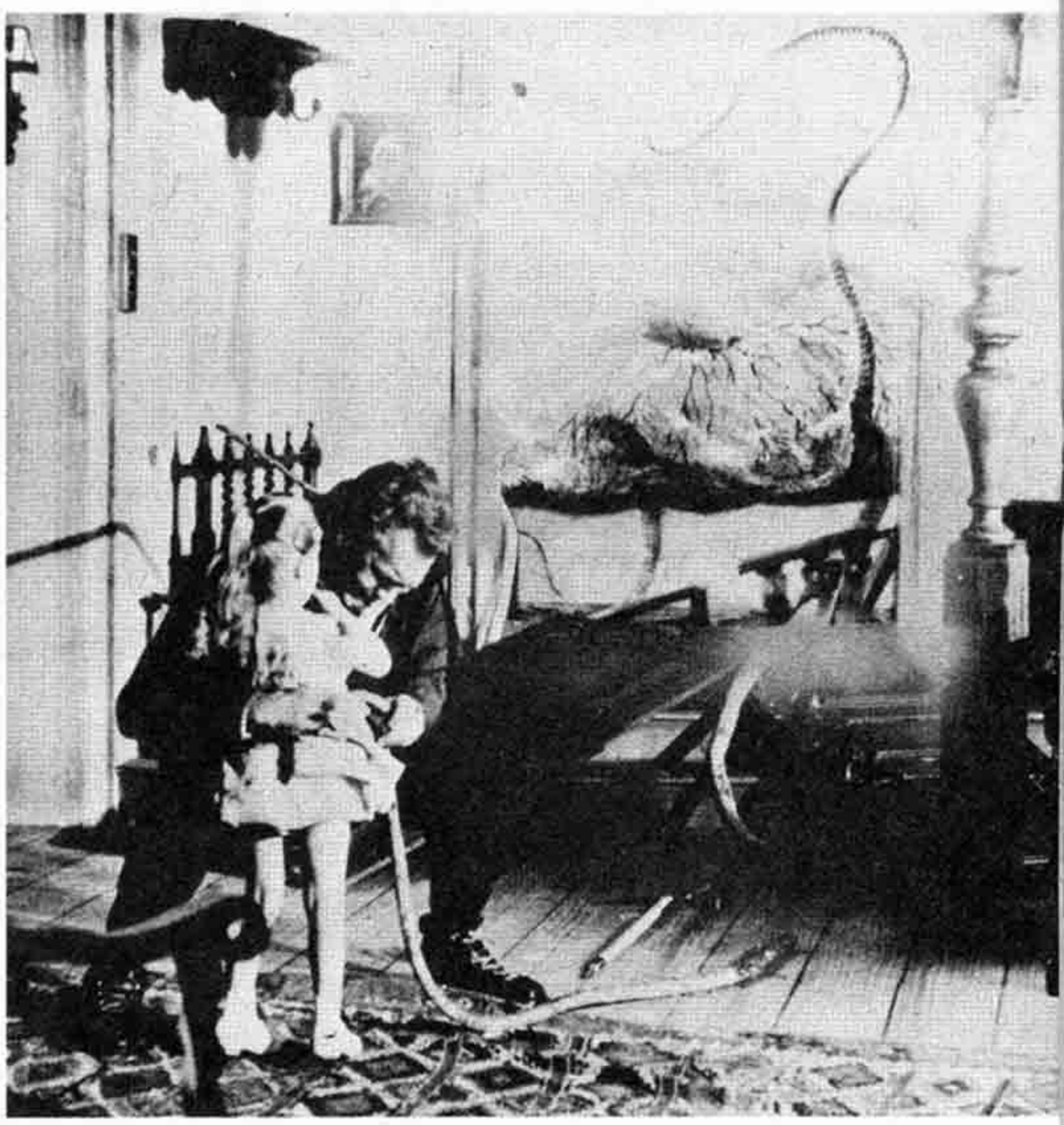
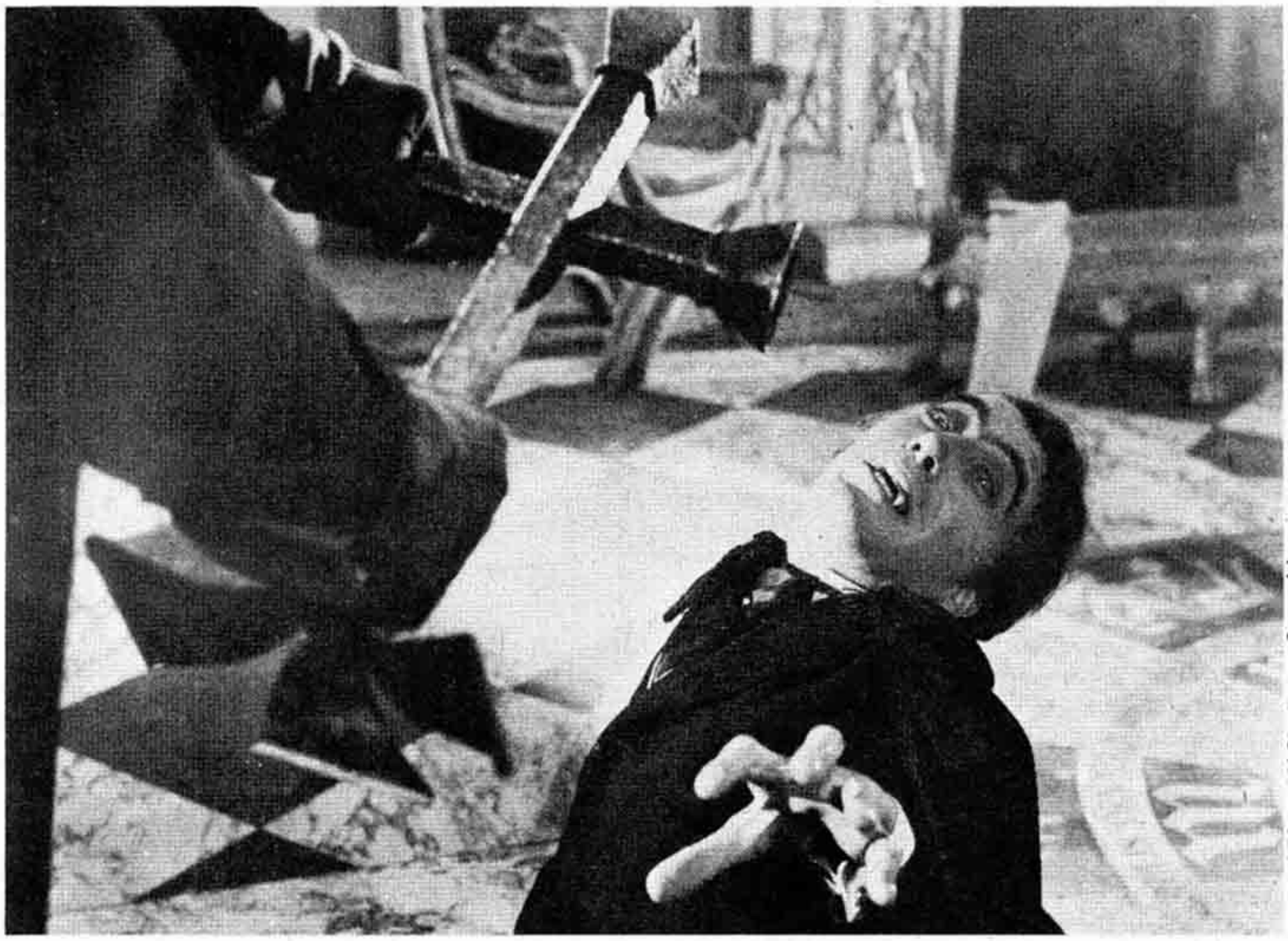
1957: The Curse of Frankenstein. Lee, Cushing, Fisher, Sangster rediscover horror.

1960: Jack the Ripper. Eddie Byrne played the Victorian psycho in the Hammer version.

1970: The Horror of Frankenstein. Sangster debuts as a Hammer director.



1958: The Crawling Eye. Sanger's excellent script overcame the cheapjack effects in this adaptation from British TV.



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THE HORROR OF SANGSTER

The screenwriter behind Hammer Films' revivals of Frankenstein and Dracula recalls his role in that studio's "Golden Age."

By JAMES H. BURNS

"Horror films are getting more and more violent," declares Jimmy Sangster, co-screenwriter of Paramount Picture's upcoming chill-fest, *Phobia*. "The producers and directors will eventually drown in their own blood. Then they'll start doing really clever scripts again."

Sangster's tainted optimism might seem slightly bizarre, but the writer-director-producer should know what he's talking about: he's one of film's few true authorities on fantastic fear. Sangster's best known for contributing the scripts for some of Hammer Films' most famous pictures, including *The Curse of Frankenstein*, and *The Horror of Dracula*. Sangster wrote over forty screenplays while still in England. Since coming to America in the early seventies, the 52-year old writer's worked on such television presentations as *Ghost Story (Circle of Fear)*, *Scream Pretty Peggy*, *A Taste of Evil*, and *The Witching Time*.

Sangster left school when he was fifteen and was able to enter the film industry thanks to a talent shortage created by World War II. After working "on camera at a small company," Sangster was hired by Eton Studios—"when it was in its prime"—as a second assistant director. After serving in the R.A.F., Sangster was hired by Hammer where he proceeded from second assistant director to first AD, to production manager, and finally to associate producer. The Briton didn't begin writing until he was 29.

"All of the Hammer production personnel were sitting around the office one day talking about our next picture," Sangster recalls. "We had just released *Quatermass* which to everybody's surprise had been a large success, so we wanted to do another science fiction picture. But there weren't many SF scripts lying around. Nobody in England seemed to be doing them in those days. Somebody at the meeting said, 'Why don't we have a story where *this* happens,' and then I said, 'Oh yeah, and then so and so,' and then someone continued and I added, 'And then we can go here . . .' By the end of the hour we had sort of worked out a rough story except that I had contributed a little bit more than anybody else. Michael Carreras, who was then the studio producer, said, 'Why don't you go and write this all down?' I said, 'I'm not a *writer*.' He said, 'Write it down. If we like it, we'll buy it.' I wrote the story and Hammer liked it. They said, 'Go and do the screenplay,' so I said, 'I'm not a *writer*.' Hammer said, 'Write it anyway. You're on staff. If we like it, we'll use it.' I wrote it, Hammer liked it, and they made it as *X—The Unknown*."

Following *X—The Unknown*, Hammer decided to retell Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, despite audiences' powerful memories of Universal's landmark adaptations.

"I have no idea of what actually prompted them to make *The Curse of Frankenstein*," Sangster smiles. "At the time, everybody said they were mad to do it. The only way that the Universal movies affected us was that although the source material was in the public domain, they held some kind of copyright on all of their *Frankenstein* pictures, so our monster couldn't resemble Karloff's creature."

Was it hard for the writer to bring a new

1958: The Horror of Dracula. Sangster, Fisher, Lee and Cushing—and another landmark Hammer film.

approach to material that was so well known by the public?

"I don't think we *did* approach it different," Sangsters laughs. "We did the classic *Frankenstein* straight from the novel. We did the same thing on *The Horror of Dracula*. As a personal challenge, I really didn't consider myself a writer, so I just went ahead and did it. I was still more into production at the time, or at least that's the way I considered myself."

The Golden Age

Modern fright fans regard Hammer's early monster making years as a second hey-day for horror films. Was that so-called "golden era" all that it's now cracked up to be?

"It was great!" Sangster beams. "We had sort of a repertory company not only with the actors, but with the production crew as well. We were like a family. It was great fun, especially during the first five or six pictures. I was happy that Hammer became active in the fantasy field because of those reasons. I really had had no interest in the genre before that. I didn't have too much preparation or familiarity to deal with the field. I just got lucky that the first couple of films that I wrote were successful. Everybody wanted to start doing similar type pictures. I had the credits, so they all came to me."

Was that when Sangster began considering himself a writer?

"Yes. What happened was that two or three picures after *X—The Unknown*, I confronted myself with the fact that although I was writing in my spare time, I was still serving as a production manager full time, and if I *wrote* full time, I could probably make more money. Finally, Michael Carreras suggested that I had to make up my mind on what I wanted to do. I left my staff position at Hammer and for the next six months I didn't sell anything. I was finally considering going to Michael to ask for my job back when I got a telegram from a television company that wanted me to work for them. That money lasted me about another three or four months at which time I got another assignment. That was when I started considering myself a writer—when I was able to make a living at it."

A closer look at the Hammer-Sangster Ripper.

So, the rumor that Jimmy Sangster "quit" Hammer is true?

"I never 'quit' Hammer," Sangster corrects. "When I gave up my job as a production manager, I began to do free-lance work for them. It's just that during my first year of being a full-time writer, about 75% of my output went to Hammer and then that figure gradually went down during the following years. I never had a row with Hammer. I always got on very well with them. If there *was* a Hammer, I still would be getting on very well with them."

Several former Hammer employees have said that the studio became locked into a format that they didn't want their writers breaking away from. Did that make it difficult for Sangster to try to create fresh and intriguing material?

"I don't think I ever did create fresh material!" quips the screenwriter. "I suppose, however, that that's not completely true. While I was with Hammer I did the standard run of *Dracula*, *Mummies*, and *Frankenstein* films, but I also did two pirate movies with Christopher Lee, and then the *Psycho*—type pictures. I never had any problems changing from one area to another. It never bothered me that there was really no desire to do something different at Hammer, because I could always do something new for somebody else."

It was Sangster himself who actually gave Hammer Films a major boost by introducing the studio to "psychological" horror films.

"I had written a script called *Taste of Fear* for another company," says Sangster. "I was supposed to produce it for these people but then the head of their company had a heart attack and it never came off. I really liked the script and I wanted to see it made. I took *Taste of Fear* to Hammer and told them that if they wanted it, I would buy it back from the original studio and produce it for them. So, in fact, Hammer didn't consciously go into the *Psycho* genre. They were offered a final shooting script for a film that Columbia Pictures said they would distribute. That's how

1965: The Nanny. Did Bette Davis do it? Produced and written by Sangster; one of his best.

they got into that particular category of horror films."

Monsters More Fun

"I think the *Psycho*-type movies are probably scarier, but the monster films are a little more fun to do. A monster movie might frighten you, but it's a total fantasy. If you go to see a *Psycho*-type film you might say, 'That was fun. I was frightened,' but when you go home, you're going to look under your bed to make sure that there isn't a maniac hiding there. You're not going to look under your bed for a mummy, werewolf, or Frankenstein monster."

After penning a few more psychological thrillers, Sangster decided to try his hand at prose, something which many screenwriters wish they had the time to do. He's since written five novels: *Touchfeather, Touchfeather Too, Your Friendly Neighborhood Death Peddler, Foreign Exchange* (the latter two were produced as ABC-TV movies), and *Private I.*

"I became a novelist in what seems to be my *classic* manner," Sangster grins. "I was between assignments for Sydney Box, the producer. Sydney had just set up a publishing house and he told me to write a novel. He said that I was on the payroll and that I had nothing to do for four weeks anyway. I asked, 'What do I know from novel writing?' Sangster answered, 'Well, write it. If we like it, we'll publish it.' At the time, I hadn't gotten to do a spy film, and I've always been particularly fond of espionage tales, so my first four books were basically spy stories. I enjoyed doing them. It was fun. In a novel, you go straight to your audience with no interference from directors or actors. You can say whatever you want to directly to your readers. I'd like to do more books, but it isn't very profitable. One of them has even been translated into nine languages and made about $20,000, but compared to writing for films or television, that isn't that much money."

Despite his diversification, Sangster readily admits that his prosperity was at least partially related to that of Hammer's. Inherently, some of his failures also involved the studio. One of both Hammer's and the writer's greatest flops was *The Horror of Frankenstein,** Sangster's directorial debut.

"Hammer first contacted me about the film while I was in America writing one of my novels," Sangster remembers. "They were going to remake *The Curse of Frankenstein* and wanted me to rewrite their script, but I turned the assignment down. Then they offered to let me produce the picture but I said no again, because I had already done that. When I told them I might be interested in doing the picture if they would let me direct it as well, Hammer said that I *could* direct it, so I decided to do *The Horror of Frankenstein.*

"Hammer wanted to do a straight remake, but I thought it would work better as a satire. That idea was ultimately a mistake. *The Horror of Frankenstein* made the fans angry and the people who weren't Hammer-enthusiasts didn't come to see it anyway."

Unfortunately, *The Horror of Frankenstein* inadvertantly led to Sangster's and Hammer's next collaborative failure, *Lust For A Vampire.*

"I had just finished shooting *The Horror of Frankenstein* and was busy editing it," says Jimmy. "Terry Fisher was supposed to direct *Lust For a Vampire.* The film's sets had been done, the screenplay was finished, and 80% of the casting was completed. Suddenly, Terry broke a leg and Hammer was right up the proverbial creek. I was on the lot as it were and they asked me if I'd like to do it. Feeling rather flush having just finished directing my first picture, I said, 'Yes, sure. I'd love to do it.' From the day that I agreed to direct *Lust For a Vampire,* I had only one week of preparation before shooting was to begin. All I could really do once production commenced was point the camera and say, 'Action.' We were able to institute some rough day-to-day script changes, but the screenplay's problems ran much deeper than that. The film needed a complete from page one rewrite, but there was just no way that production could be delayed. I shouldn't have done it, but I did."

Ralph Bates, *Lust For a Vampire*'s star, has told the story that at a screening of the film, Sangster almost got ill and literally hid on the floor when "Strange Love" is played on the picture's soundtrack. Is that true?

"Yes," Sangster winces, "it absolutely happened. As soon as I had finished *Lust For a Vampire*, that was it. I was off the film. I didn't even have a director's cut, so I had never seen the movie *together*. Ralph (who is *not* Alan Bates' brother, but *is* related to Louis Pasteur), and I went to a public cinema in London to see the film. We were sitting front row circle and when that song came on, I was so embarrased that I actually fell to my knees and hid. In retrospect, I don't know exactly why I did that: the theatre was nearly empty."

Next issue, Jimmy Sangster discusses his move to America, horror on TV, his work on The Legacy, *Paramount's upcoming* Phobia, *the status and fate of horror films, his possible involvement with Hammer's new anthology television series, and his own future projects.*

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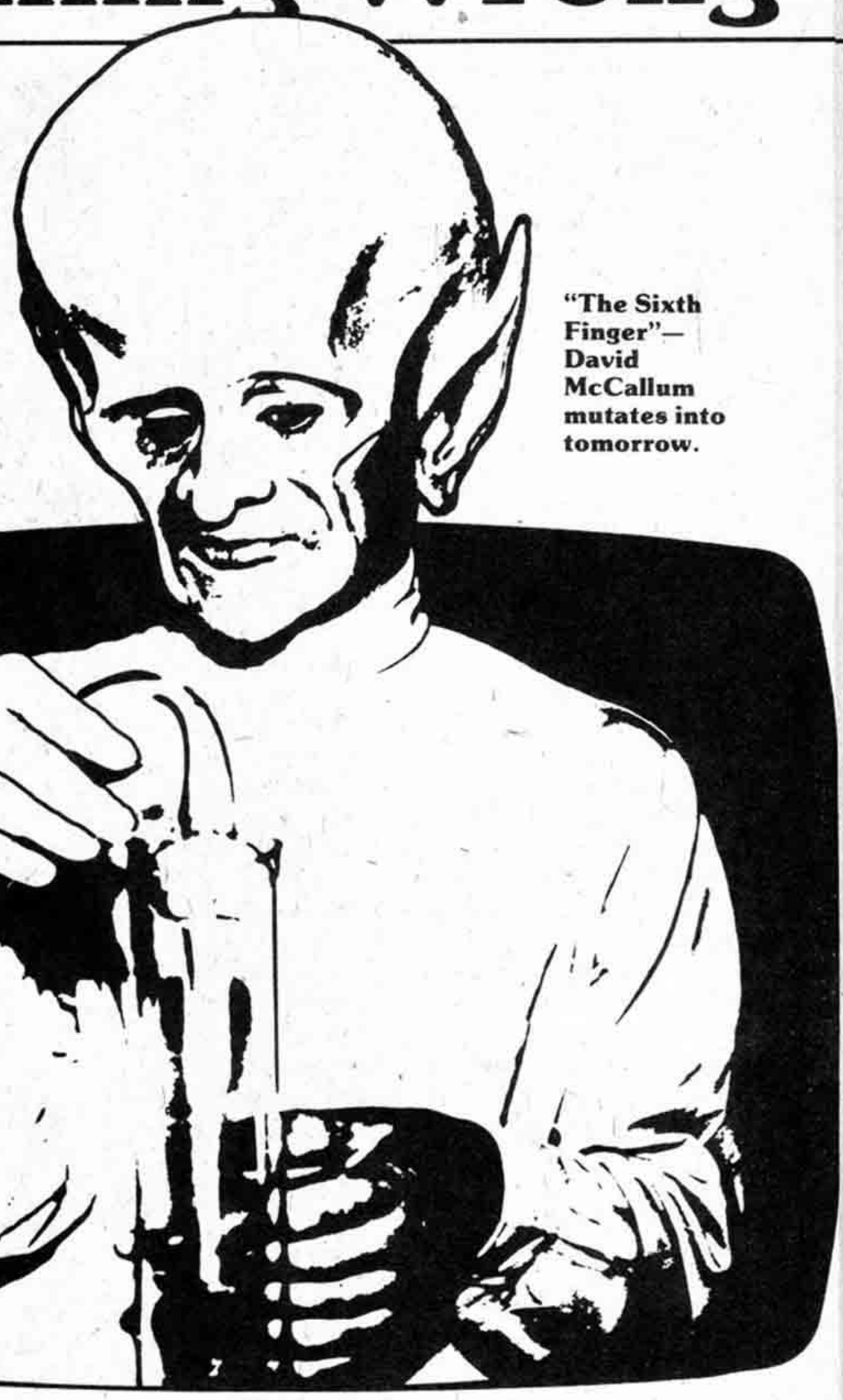
1968: The Anniversary. Davis hogged the show as a Mom whose "love" destroys her family.

*Hey, wait a minute! You're talking about one of my favorite Hammers! —the Editor

There Is Nothing Wrong W

Leslie Stevens on *The Outer Limits*, Part Two

By STEVE SWIRES



"The Sixth Finger"—David McCallum mutates into tomorrow.

Editor's Note:
Last issue, we explored a bit of Stevens' early background, and the very beginnings of TV's landmark series The Outer Limits. *In the second and final part of the interview, we look at those qualities that made the series so unique, and find out what went wrong with Stevens' most recent SF television effort,* Battlestar Galactica.

FANGORIA: How did you achieve such detail and still get the shows finished on time?

LESLIE STEVENS: One thing we really prided ourselves on—and that the cadre that came out of the series prides itself on to this day—was a tremendous organization before we started shooting. We always knew how to run a show. There wasn't an aspect of it that wasn't masterfully planned. A lot of stuff is done very amateurishly today in terms of the economy. Even in our music that Dominic Frontiere composed, we used the principle of having an enormous orchestra. We had a 60-piece orchestra, and no other show in television remotely came close to that. The way we did it was by having 60 pieces in the morning, which shrank to about 25 in the afternoon, and there were about 5 of them left in the evening to go into over-time playing background music and nightclub sounds. We went from an enormous group that played the great emotional themes, down to the very isolated single-instrument mood stuff at the end of the day. Nowadays they don't seen to organize that well, so they start with a small group and grow to a giant one, and run over-time and kill themselves.

"Simulated" spaceflight proves to be real; more nasties in "Counterweight."

FANG: The dominant visual device in contemporary television is the zoom shot. When the director can't figure out how to end a scene, he'll simply have the cameraman zoom in on a door handle or on a telephone or on a lamp shade. In contrast, every shot in *The Outer Limits* seemed carefully composed.

STEVENS: That was one of the marks of the Daystar Company. I've always felt that Daystar was way, way ahead of its time. An example of how unusual Daystar really was is that after all that work every day, we made available to all the personnel in the company opportunities in the evening that had nothing to do with film, but which reflected our interest in the international film community. For instance, we gave free language lessons in French, Italian, and Russian every night. We really loved film, and we had a great sense of artistic excitement. It was very idealistic, but at the time we really felt we'd be able to make some sort of dent in the mass mediocrity of television. We were kind of inspired by John Kennedy, who was making everybody feel they could do anything in those days. We really cared and we took an honest try at it, whether we were successful or not—but I'll tell you the attempt was as earnest and as believing and as true as anything has ever been.

FANG: It certainly showed in the finished product. *The Outer Limits* was one of the

With Your Television Set

few television series with a thought-provoking sub-text beyond the story that was being told.

STEVENS: That was definitely set as one of the goals, to have that control voice give you something to mull over.

FANG: Why did most of the key creative personnel leave the series after the first season?

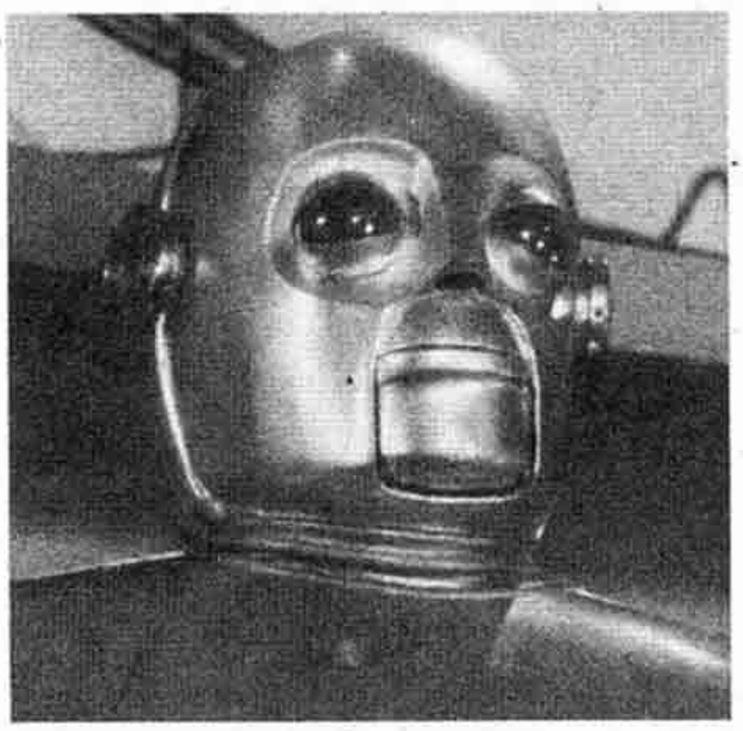
STEVENS: It was part of a big cost-cutting deal with United Artists Television, who co-owned the show with me and Joe Stefano. They made some kind of arrangement with ABC, that if we would finish out Ben Brady's contract and make him the producer of *The Outer Limits*, the network would renew us for another season. So they made that deal,and we all slowly backed away. The only Daystar people left were Dom Frontiere, Elaine Michea, who was the production coordinator,'and Seeleg Lester, who was the story editor and whom we all really loved and respected. They then cut Dom out, and the music was done by Harry Lubin. Gradually everybody was phased out except for the line production unit and Seeleg, and I think he was almost single-handedly responsible for the basic story quality staying on the high level that it did. Even so, I don't think the second season had the aspiration in it that the first had.

FANG: Didn't you have enough control to prevent such a deal from damaging the series?

STEVENS: No. It was that attrition that occurs with the network's necessary politics. They certainly had to do what they had to do to survive, so they made certain moves. They were very leery of dealing with a company that was run by artists. We had no business affairs group at all at Daystar. I was the president and I was a writer, Dom was one of the top bosses in it

A park ride proes to be a spaceship with nasty aliens in "Second Chance."

ALL PHOTOS: ABC-TV



Adam Link from "I, Robot," scripted by SF writer Otto Binder.

and he was a composer, and Stefano was a writer. In fact, everybody who had a position of authority and power in the company was an artist, or at least trying to be. That was very scary to the network, because we'd occasionally band together and seriously frighten them.

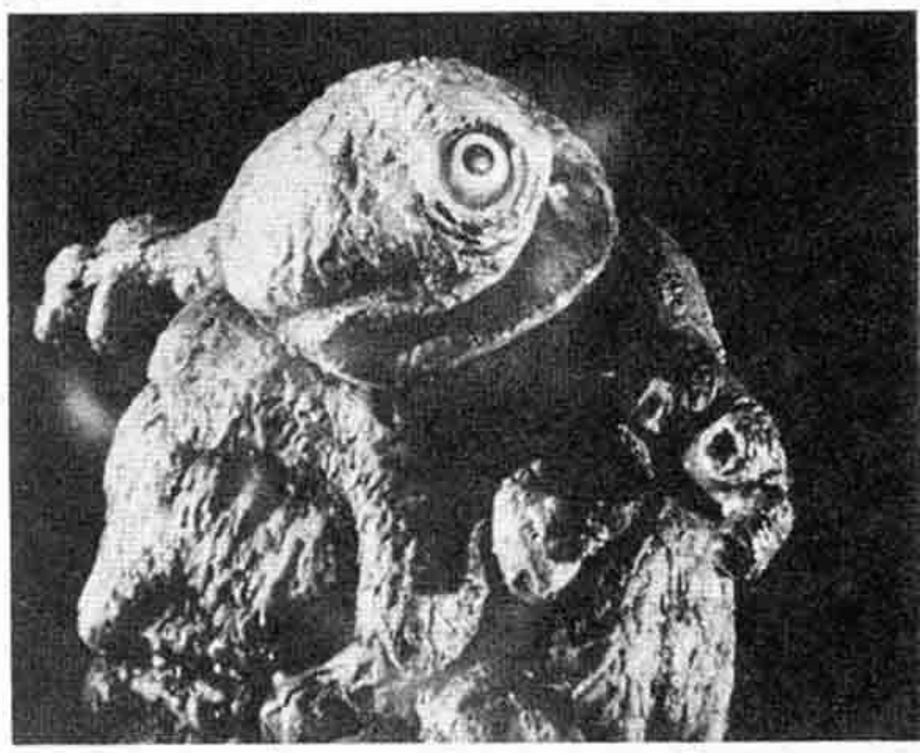
We wore out our welcome during the first season, when Joe Stefano wanted to direct a particular episode and we thought he should. Every one of us said: "Heck yeah, he's earned that. He'll do a good job, and it's well worth it." So we said to the network: "You'll have to let him do it." They said: "We're not going to, because we don't want him to direct. We want somebody else." We then sent them a telegram saying: "Unless Stefano directs, we will not deliver the next six episodes." That didn't go over very well, especially with a potential $4 million lawsuit hanging over our heads and a catastrophe in terms of all the sponsors who had already bought airtime. To have a bunch of upstarts just announce like we did that we weren't going to deliver a show didn't exactly make us seem to be the most reliable people in town, but the only weapon was to go on strike. I remember we were then visited by two lawyers, who said: "If you go through with this, you'll be wiped out in more ways than you can count." So finally we all backed down and Joe never got to direct, but it took the heart out of everybody to realize we could be run over by a giant steam-roller.

FANG: Stefano was an ideal choice to be the producer *particularly* because he was a writer, most notably of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. In far too many cases, television producers have had little or no creative experience, and therefore they mistrust—and consequently abuse—writers.

STEVENS: I think ultimately, no matter how you slice it, the human imagination is the source of all creativity. The realization of that is obviously crucially important, but you can't start with an unimaginative concept, no matter how imaginative you are about trying to bring it off, because its very nucleus is pedestrian.

FANG: In all honesty, I don't think you or Stefano have been associated with projects worthy of your abilities since *The Outer Limits*.

STEVENS: I've always felt that Joe and I have been learning and paying a lot of dues, and maneuvering ourselves into positions to be able to do what we *really* want to do. We're both sort of late-blooming flowers. We don't feel we're at the end of our careers, but are instead just now coming up to where we can get a shot at what we really want to work on. It's simply a matter of time and position and security. I think Joe will eventually be able to afford to be a really fine artist. Some people can afford it because they have nothing, so it doesn't matter to them if they starve to death becoming a great painter. But if you have a family and a mortgage, and you have obligations and a sense of responsibility, it takes a *long* time to be able to afford



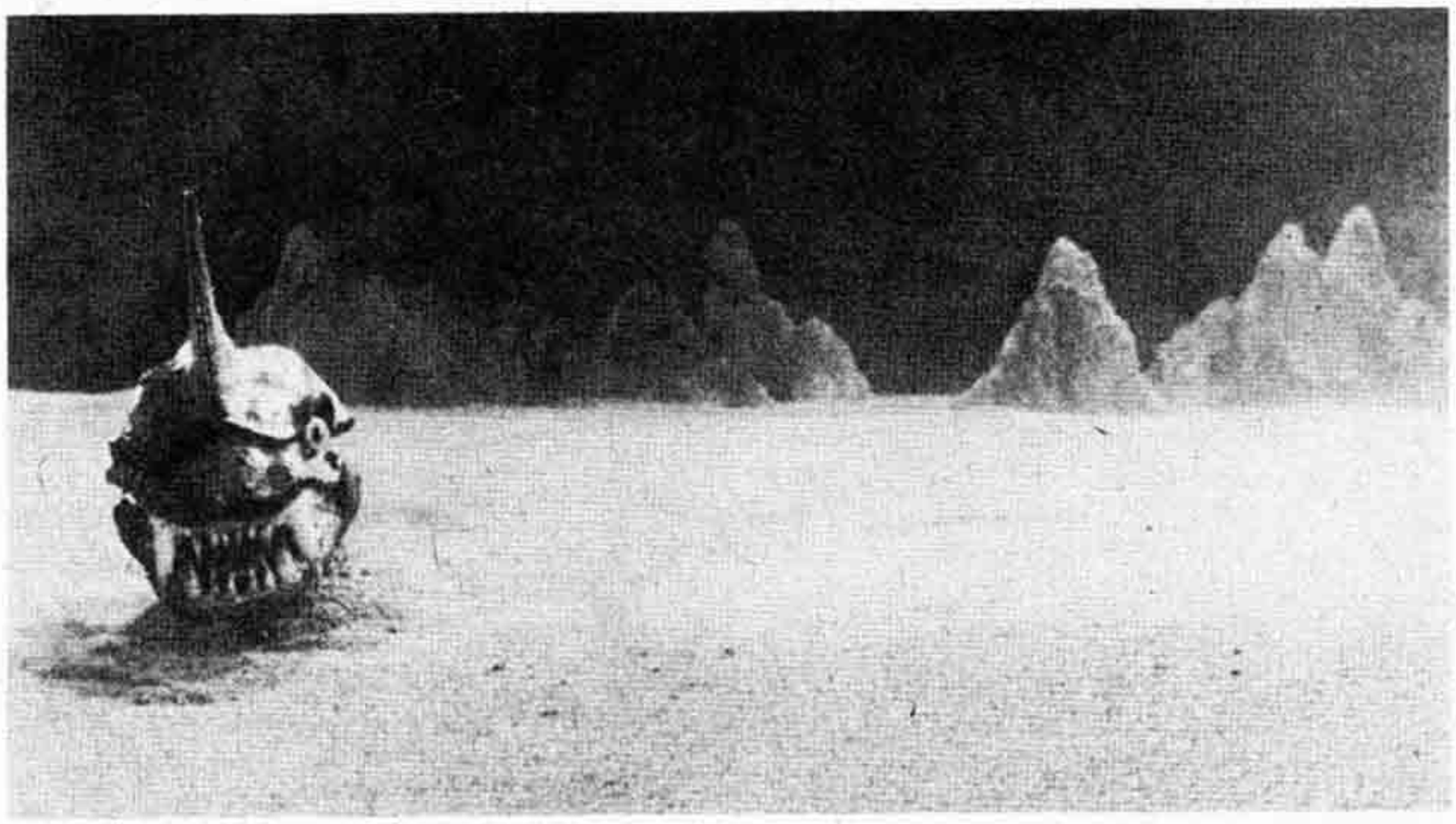
A mysterious box contains a nasty alien in "Don't Open Till Doomsday."

to be a true, independent, honest voice.

FANG: I didn't see much evidence of that kind of voice in *Galactica*, it was a far more limited approach to science fiction than *The Outer Limits*.

STEVENS: I think Glen Larson's original intention was to do a people-oriented "idea" series about the search for the missing 13th planet Earth by this pre-civilization group, which would foreshadow the development of mankind. Unfortunately, there's that attrition that sets in again, where the concept that will sell to the network and will hold the mass audience is that pell-mell driving action approach, which is the most basic, visceral material you can get.

I would say that the first hour of the three-hour premiere episode was genuinely important. I really feel Glen tapped into a



Another nasty cruises the "Sea of Sand."

moving, disturbing, inter-galactic cosmic feeling, and really got into the awe and mystery of the universe for a while. The war of betrayal that destroyed those inner planets that were the matrix of the human race was realized so brilliantly on film by John Dykstra and the director, Richard Colla. Those talents were going full blast in an area in which Glen was writing what he believed and cared about, and was innocent in his drive to bring off a human document.

In the second hour, he was literally *driven* by the network to include sub-plots that dealt with what they call "people stories." If he had been able to stay in the tragic mode in which he was writing in the first place, I have a feeling the show would have been more organic, he would have been more comfortable, and the network would probably have been a lot happier. But due to everybody's earnest efforts to add in their two cents, it got to be a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth. If you paint a picture using a few primary colors you can produce something wonderful, but if you mix in many colors it clashes and doesn't work. As a matter of fact, I wrote most of the second episode, which was split into two parts after the premiere episode was shown, but the revisions were so extensive I finally took my name off it. It was rewritten by several "cooks," and I just didn't want to be part of a large group.

FANG: In view of such compromising experiences in network television, have you found more creative freedom in your current assignment as screenwriter of the feature film version of *Sheena, Queen Of The Jungle* for Columbia Pictures?

STEVENS: Not necessarily, because features also have a lot of limitations on them. I was really just a step better off, but not yet anywhere near where I wanted to be. It got to the point where I thought I'd have to wait until I was 75 and had saved enough money and been a big enough success to finally do my projects the way I want to do them, which is with no holds barred.

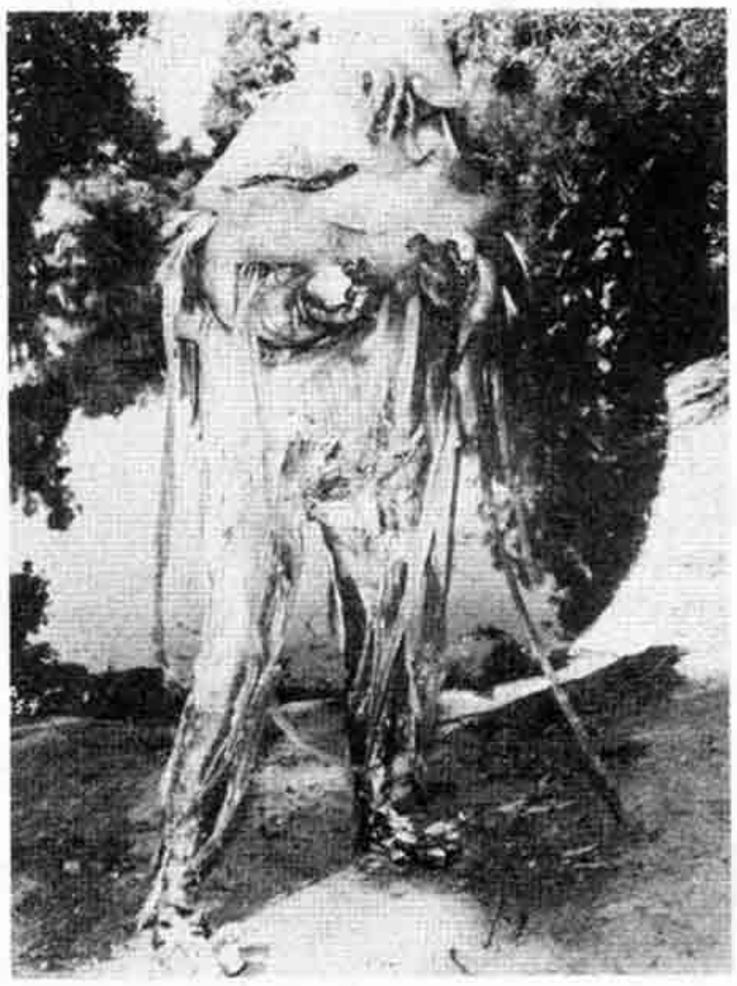
I probably wouldn't have gone near *Sheena* if they hadn't offered me a very good deal. When they offered it to me, I asked if I could do some things with it that would take it up a notch in my view of how it ought to be written. I wanted to shift it from being just another jungle picture into realms of high imagination, and connect it on to the *Chariot Of The Gods* concept. To his great credit the producer, Paul Aratow, was just overjoyed that it was even remotely possible. He got me very enthusiastic about it, and I became very high on the possibility that *Sheena* could do things that would be very unexpected and really knock the audience on its ear.

Since I've been on the project Paul has never diminished in his efforts to treat it that way. The picture *will* be done that way to a degree, but it won't come anywhere near to what I thought it would be when I began on it, and had an extra edge of enthusiasm because I thought more would be possible. I like what we're doing so far, but it's got some heat on it already which will make it difficult to follow a science fiction direction. It will be great "fun" entertainment about a female super hero, but I can see a limitation being placed on it by the studio to keep it from shifting gears. It would be enormously expensive to do it "right," because it would need a lot of special make-up and effects. It will still have some of what was originally hoped for in it, but I don't think it will have as much as Paul and I wanted.

One of the nasty residents of the planet Chromo in "The Mice."

FANG: On a more optimistic note, you recently became President and Director of Creative Affairs for a new independent production company called "Empress"—an acronym for "Enterprises in Media Production, Recordings, Entertainment, Stage and Screen"—with a reported financial backing of over *half a billion* dollars. Will this finally mean that you won't have to wait until you're 75 to do your projects your own way?

STEVENS: The dream I've had all my life of hoping I would get there some day is now at hand, and I'm going to get to do what I want to do. As Director of Creative Affairs I'm on the board of directors, and as President I'm the one who decides what to do and how to do it. This means that I will eventually get to do a couple of science



This alien is captured by nasty earth scientists in "The Bellero Shield."

fiction projects I've had for years but was never able to do before. For the immediate future, however, we're doing certain projects that are strategic moves in order to put the industry on notice that we're a really formidable company which has money to spend, but which is being guided by *creators* who are not answerable to Business Affairs. Our projects will range from thrillers to romances to musicals, and even to stage plays.

"Empress" is really my old Daystar Company reborn, but with everything Daystar didn't have. It's got all of the Daystar principles, and a lot of the Daystar people are already back with me on it, among them Dominic Frontiere and Elaine Michea. There are all kinds of possibilities open to us, and I'm not going to close any door in the whole industry—except for one. I'm no longer interested in network television. That's at the end of the line for me now.

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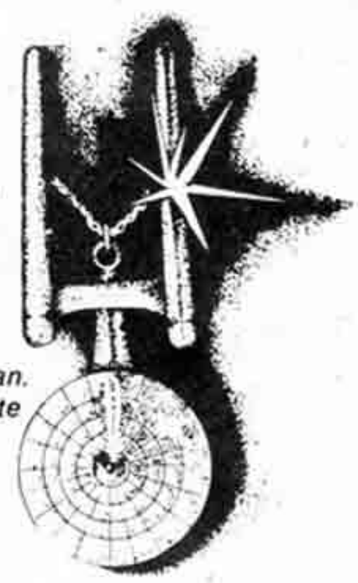

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Scanners

(continued from page 9)

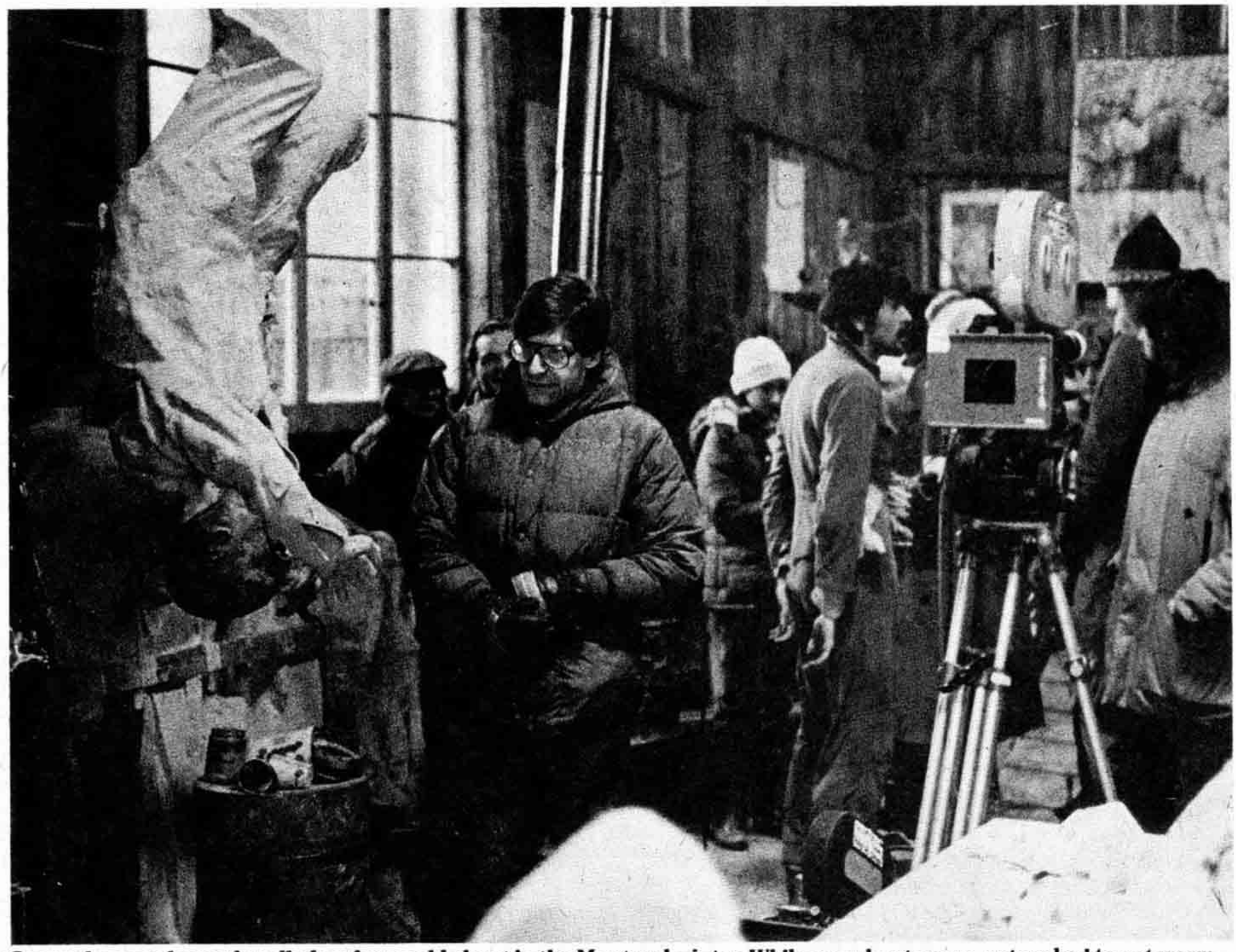
decided that the money set aside for that purpose would be better used in re-shooting the end, since a lot of people wouldn't be seeing it with Dolby sound anyway [many theaters don't have the necessary sound system], but everybody will see the ending. So we put the money there instead, and did a very careful, detailed re-shoot of the very last two scenes.

"Dick was well-recovered by that time, so we were fortunate to have him come on the set at that time. Earlier I'd been quite disappointed that he couldn't actually come up and work with us, so I was really thrilled, and it couldn't have worked out better.

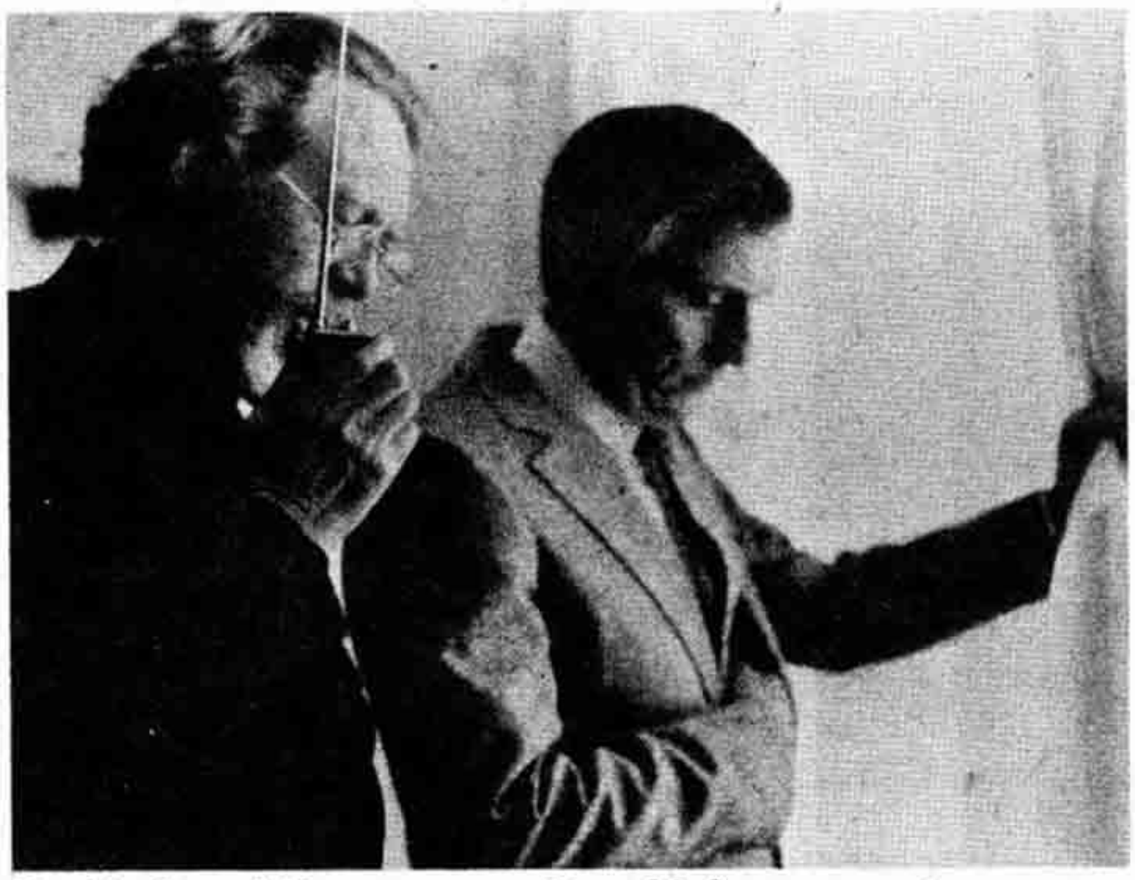
"Dick's a delightful person, very kind and very generous. He's a master—no question—and it was a total delight to work with him."

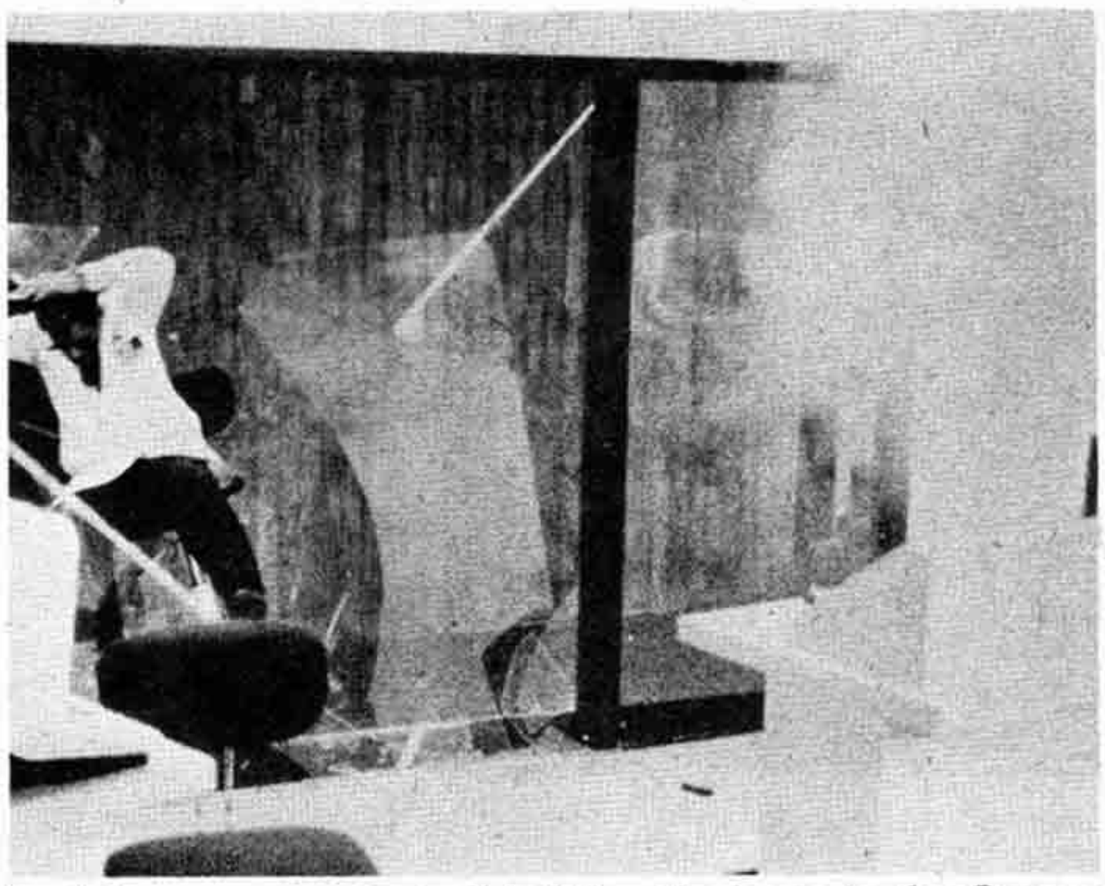
Cronenberg vs. The Censor

While Smith has certainly devised some startling effects for the film's conclusion, it's the film's very opening scene that seems most likely to cause trouble when



Cronenberg and crew bundled up for a cold shoot in the Montreal winter. While crew kept warm, actors had to *act* warm.





Dr. Ruth and Consec security chief prepare to move against the scanners, as all hell breaks loose in the Consec computer room.

the completed film is screened before the Motion Picture Association of America for a rating. During a brief conversation with Claude Heroux, the film's producer suggested that the exploding head sequence may not be included in the final print. Cronenberg admits to that possibility.

"If we were to get an 'X' from the MPAA, and it becomes obvious that it's the head that would be the cause of it, then we'd certainly have to think about it, because the alternative of releasing it with an 'X' really would be a shame." In case such a ratings emergency does arise, Cronenberg already has an alternate take completed, filmed for use in possible future TV broadcasts of *Scanners*, in which the Consec scanner dies of a heart attack.

Cameron unVales the secret of the scanners.

The heart attack substitution is not a move Cronenberg will gladly or even willingly make. He feels that graphic shock at the film's beginning is important in establishing the extent of the scanners' awesome power. But . . . "'X' really puts you in the porno category," says Cronenberg. "What you really need is another rating category."

And while Cronenberg is undoubtedly Canada's most successful home-grown filmmaker, he has met with similar censorship problems at home. In Canada, each province has its own system of governing film standards—and the toughest is the province where Cronenberg lives and works, Ontario. Cronenberg explains; "what happens is that the Ontario board cuts each print, every print that will be shown in the province. They cut them themselves, and keep the pieces. If you want to put those prints back together again, you can, but you have to go to them, give them back the censor band that they place around each approved reel, and splice each piece back in. That's a lot of trouble to go to, it's a lot easier for a distributor to say let's cut them all the same way, and not have to worry about it. Or you can just lose track—it's very hard to guarantee that one of those Ontario prints won't be shown in Manitoba. I had to fight to make sure that *The Brood* didn't get shown in the other provinces cut."

After *Scanners* runs past the censors (safely, we hope), and after Cronenberg survives the major publicity hooplah Avco Embassy Pictures plans for the film's opening, Cronenberg has another two projects already lined up. One of these is a real dream project, which we won't reveal just yet—it would be just too sad if that dream doesn't come true. The other is just as exciting, and the title says it all: *David Cronenberg's Frankenstein.*

Cronenstein

All the details on *Frankenstein* are still up in the air—when we spoke to him Cronenberg hadn't started on the script yet, because he was still working on *Scanners*' final edit and sound mix—but he agreed to talk a bit about his hopes and intentions.

"I don't intend to remain literally faithful to the book," he says. "It doesn't interest me to do a small period piece, which is what it would be. There's a movie called *Victor Frankenstein*, with Per Oscarsson as the monster—I believe it was a Swedish-Irish coproduction. It was incredibly faithful to the book, and as a result it was a lonely, bleak art film that mainly dealt with one or two people in a room. It was a very interesting little film, and did some things that I've never seen in any other Frankenstein; for instance, the monster was made in a rented flat, an apartment, just as in Mary Shelley's book—no castle, no nothin'. The monster is very articulate, and talks people into things, including Dr. Frankenstein, as in the book. So that's another reason for not being totally faithful to the book, because that film was.

"In terms of theme, I would like to get at some things in some ways that haven't been done before. In terms of plot and detailing, it will have to be completely different, and right now I have no idea how.

"Thematically, the idea of a parent creating a child, and then rejecting the child and having the child reject the creator, that *is* the story. In Mary Shelley's terms, it was also the story of man and God—her opening quote from *Paradise Lost** sets that up.

"I'd never thought of it before, but once the idea was suggested to me, by (executive producer) Pierre David, it suddenly became obvious that, in a sense, it was the idea that I'd been working with from the beginning."

And it does seem that *Frankenstein* is the perfect vehicle for Cronenberg: all of his films have contained some variation on the "mad scientist" theme, and it will be interesting to see what he'll do with the original. And Cronenberg seems to be the one director who is best equipped to bring the real meaning of *Frankenstein* to the modern screen.

*"Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?"
—*Paradise Lost*, John Milton

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Terror

(continued from page 21)

gore, while others like to be subtly lead down into the darkness.

"What frightens me is going to a horror picture and watching the audience. Recently I was in Italy and decided to see a movie called *Cannibal Holocaust*.On the screen, a woman was being impaled. People were being burned alive—and the audience was eating their ice cream cones and watching . . . totally detached, complete unaffected. That frightens me.

"Whatever the reason, horror films are here to stay."

The director of *Blood Beach*, Jeffrey Bloom, offered his point of view on the matter when we contacted him at his Malibu home. "Audiences want some sort of visceral experience," says Blom. "It can

PHOTO: C1980 NEW WORLD PICTURES

John Saxon as Sador, chief nasty of *Battle Beyond the Stars*.

be comedy, science fiction or horror, but you need a sense of involvement with the picture and the audience. Anybody can sit home and watch TV, but if you're going to the theater and spend five bucks a ticket, there's got to be a reason. In recent years the ingredient for success has been that the picture must be contemporary. Nobody wants to look back on the past. We are involved with what's happening now, or we like to escape into tomorrow, but the past seems pretty much dead.

"Horror films have always been successful and will always be succesful because you get a safe thrill. Today I think we are all rather lethargic. We need something to shock us, make us feel something."

Bloom's comments contrast sharply with those of Charles Kaufman, the director of *Mother's Day*. "I am not of the belief—as many people in the industry are these days—that there is always a market for horror films," Kaufman says. "That's not true. For instance, a couple of friends of mine, Oliver Stone (who later won an Academy Award for the script of *Midnight Express* and is curently directing the horror feature *The Hand*) and Jeff Kappelman made a horror film called *Seizure*, about five years ago. It was a very nice film, and had a good distributor, AIP. But nobody came to see it, because no one at the time was going to see horror pictures.

"There are two reasons why horror pictures are important these days. One is that it allows people to experience danger, and to an extent their own death, at a safe distance. It helps people to deal with their own heavily-charged emotions.

"Also, horror films are big whenever there's a lot of tension in society. Specifically now, we're going through a lot of political and economic tension and frustration. Ayatollah . . . inflation . . . etc. Horror films give people a place where they can come in and scream their heads off, get a lot of this out, and it's perfectly acceptable. In the 60s and early 70s, there were other outlets—protest demonstrations, the whole Vietnam thing. Nowadays there's no place where it's socially acceptable to scream and let those feelings out—nowhere except in horror films and on roller coasters."

Kaufman feels that a major difference between *Mother's Day* and the sudden glut of *Halloween* imitators is in its handling of the killers. Unlike the current crop of shadowy masked characters lurking around the next corner, you get to know Kaufman's killers quite well.

"And we included comedy in *Mother's Day*," says Kaufman, "using it in a very planned way. Suspense is a process of building tension, reaching the payoff, and then the release of that tension. The audience has to relax so you can build the tension again. One of the best releases is comedy—when you laugh, it's a release, you relax."

When we last spoke to Kaufman, he had just received a visit from the staff of *20/20* ABC-TV's "newsmagazine" pro-

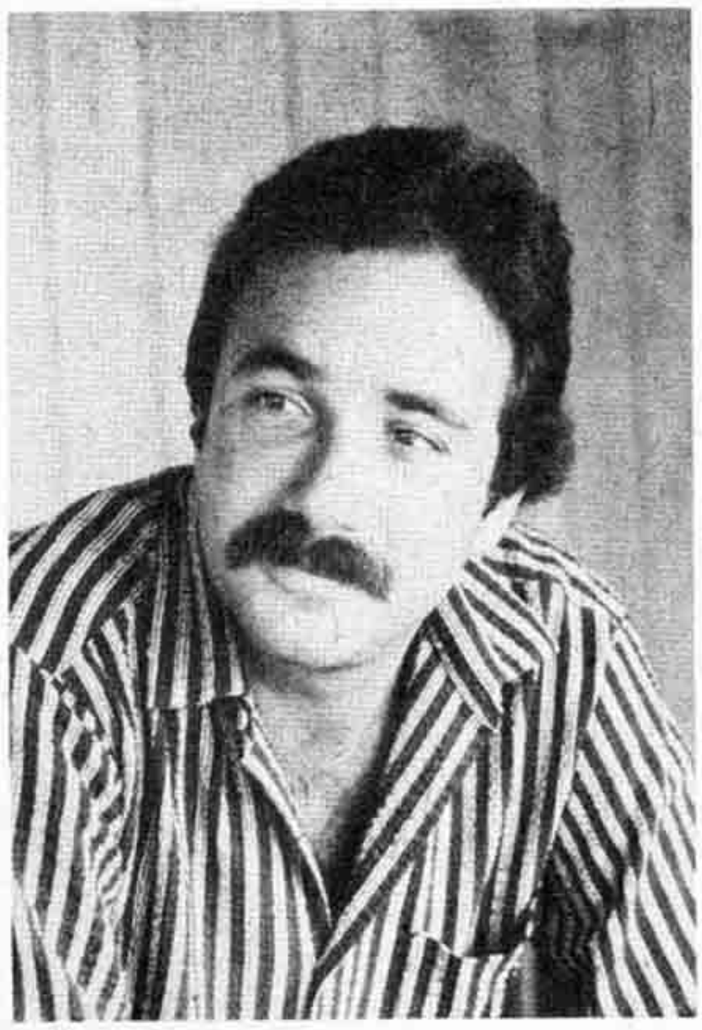

PHOTO: COURTESY CHARLES KAUFMAN

Charles Kaufman: does this man look nasty to you? Well, *does he?*

gram, who were in the process of investigating the newest charge to be leveled at horror filmmakers: sexism.

"I don't think it applies to our picture. I don't think it's sexist because our men get it a lot worse than the women. It's about women who stand up on their own two feet and fight back.

"We wanted it to be about women who get it together. We were very aware of that when we wrote it. In the film, when the three women are first encountered, they're all more or less following roles that were determined for them by society. Abbey (the girl from Chicago) is particularly weak. Later, when push comes to shove, she stands her ground and does what has to be done—and handles the situation much better than a man."

A statement which offers a perfect

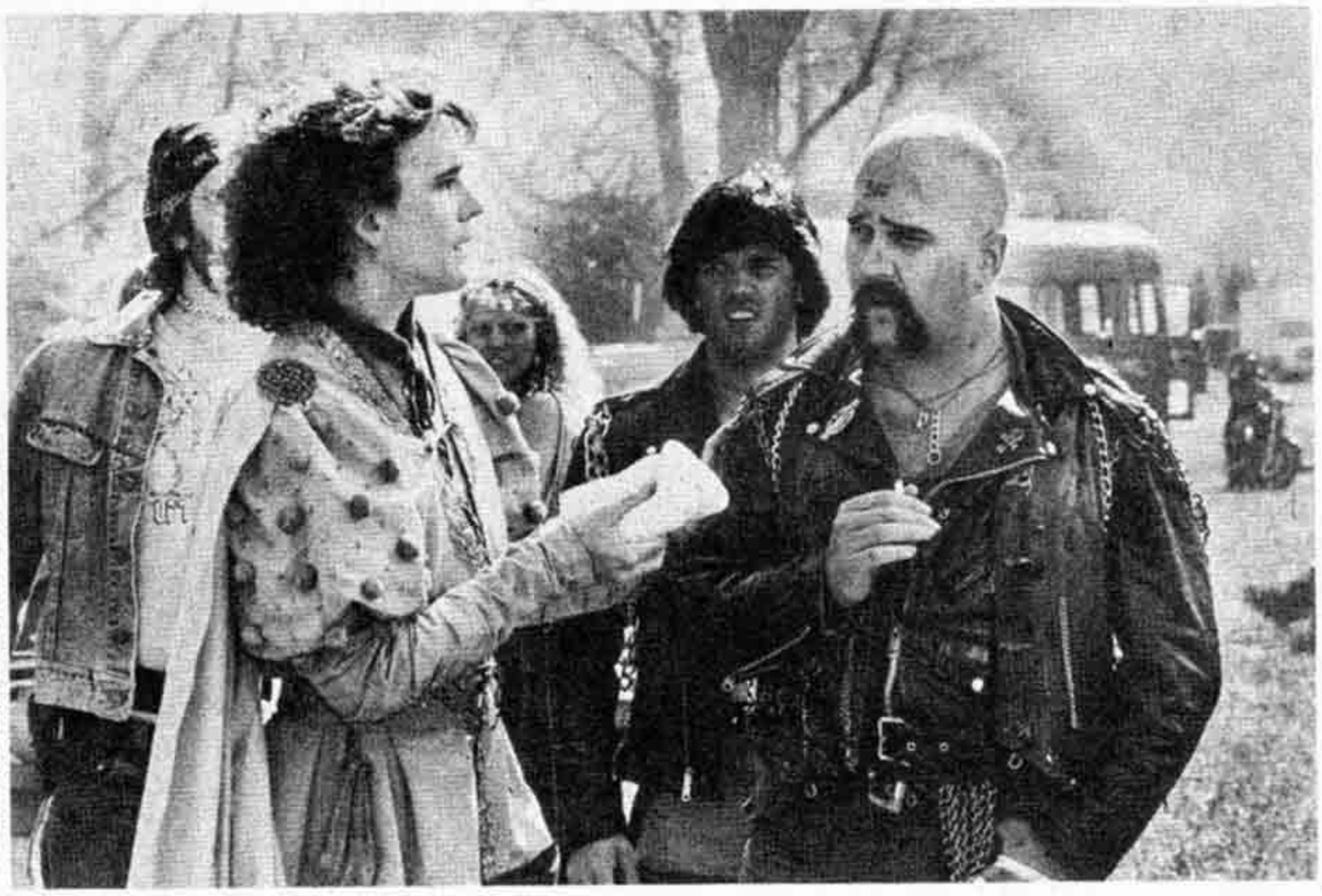

PHOTO: C1980 LAUREL ENTERTAINMENT

Nice, clean bikers meet nasty dirty bikers in *Knightriders*.

lead-in to our talk with Jane Covner, director of publicity at New World Pictures, and a recent recipient of the Academy of Science Fiction's Golden Scroll Award for Outstanding Achievement in Publicity. While New World is curently involved in a number of major science fiction ventures (including an adaptation of Isaac Asimov's *Nightfall* and a project called *Journey Beyond This Galaxy*. New World's effects lab is currently in use by Dennis and Bob Skotak, who are preparing effects for Carpenter's SF film, *Escape From New York*), New World will not be abandoning the terror field. New World's president, Roger Corman, will be celebrating his 40th anniversary as filmmaker during the 80's—40 years in which he has produced and/or directed more horror films than any other American filmmaker, ever.

Two films that may be of interest to our readers will arrive in the near future. One of these is *Something Waits in the Dark*, an amphibious version of *Island of Lost Souls*, released in Italy as *Isle of the Fishmen*. The film boasts a solid cast, including Mel Ferrer, Cameron Mitchell, Richard Johnson, Barbara Bach and Joseph Cotton, with creatures designed and built by the prolific monster maker Chris Walas. Directed in Italy by Sergio Martino, the film has been augmented by special footage shot by director Miller Drake. Just as offbeat is another imminent New World release, *Shogun Assassin*, which will run with the advertising slogan "Sword and Sorcery—with a Vengeance." The film concerns Lone Wolf, a traveling samural who is a ruthless mercenary in his public life, and a loving father to his motherless son in his private life. The film is part of a very popular film series in Japan called the "Baby Cart" series because of a recurring image—a "vicious" samurai pushing his infant son about in a carriage. The film is quite graphic in its violence, but is balanced, according to Covner, "by the warmth the father shows in caring for his son. Kurasawa's *Kagemusha* [another recent Japanese import] was so cold and dehumanized. This one is quite different. It makes you really care about its people."

Further in the future is *Hawk the Slayer*, a true sword and sorcery tale made in England by Lew Grade's ITC concerning two brothers. Hawk, played by John Terry, is good and kind and strong, and possesses the mindsword, but not the five gems that give the sword its mystic powers. Hawk's brother, Voltan, played by Jack Palance, is so hideously deformed that he must wear a black mask—and so evil that he murders his own father. *Battletruck: 2000* will soon be in production, set in a world where oil is the single most valuable commodity on earth, and heavily armed trucks defend their cargo from marauding highway pirates. Then there's *Planet of Horrors*, in which a group of stranded astronauts discover an alien artifact with the power to give flesh to their fantasies, dreams . . . and their nightmares.

"A good horror film," says Covner, "makes people forget their everyday problems, wakes them up and makes them *feel*.

"It's a form of escape—like a vacation. I find that I can't really relax during an ordinary vacation, so on the last one I went rafting. It's very hard to worry about someone's script when you're doing something as involving as that. I think people find the same value in a good horror film.

"Horror films are also very good for the exhibitors, because you don't have to have a huge budget to make one, and if it's a good film you don't need a huge promotional budget because the word of mouth spreads very rapidly, faster than on any other sort of film.

"Take for instance *Night of the Living Dead*. Its production values weren't exactly great, and it certainly didn't have any big names in the cast, but it has retained its popularity for years, because it's a really scary film. And it's really the test of time that separates the good horror films from all the others."

PHOTO: C1980 NEW WORLD PICTURES

"The greatest team in the history of mass slaughter—Lone Wolf and son.

PHOTO: C1980 NEW WORLD PICTURES

Hawk's brother Voltan.

Down the hall from Covner's office we find—what's this? Jim Wynorski? That's right—FANGORIA's fabulous former freelancer is now the advertising director at the New World film factory. We popped in and grabbed a few choice quotes from the man.

"Successful horror films have to have two things—elements of suspense, and characters you care about, like any adventure film," says Wynorski.

"Gore is fine, but when you have someone splattered against the wall, you have to care about the *character* that's getting splattered against the wall.

"Like in *The Wild Bunch*—at the end, when everyone's getting slaughtered in slow motion, these are people you've been with through the whole film. You know them and care about them.

"The director who really embodies this sort of filmmaking is George Romero. In *Dawn of the Dead* there are four characters that you're with from the very start. You care more about the guy who is bitten in the leg halfway through the picture than you did about any number of heads blown off at the very beginning. *Motel Hell* is very engaging for the same reason. However demented Farmer Vincent and Ida may be, you care about them, and even sympathize with them, because you've come to know them as people."

No article délving into the origins of the widespread love for terror would be complete without asking the man who kindled the fire in so many hearts, Forrest J. Ackerman, the pioneer SF-horror fan and founder of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine. At the world-famed Ackermansion in Hollyweird, Karlloffornia the question was posed to the gentle giant of fantastic fandom and, after a moment of thoughtful reflection, Forry looked up with those beaming eyes and said:

"Your guess is as good as mine."

Our guess takes us back to childhood and to the world of dreams, where most everyone has their first encounter with stark terror. The world can often seem big and strange and frightening to a child, and it is in dreams that we face the world in the most hidden fearful form we can imagine. That is when we are given the chance to face our fears and conquer them—or else bury them deeper in the business of our daily lives. Can't the same then be true of the waking dreams of the cinema? The creature before us is only wearing a mask. Behind the mask he is hideous, he is beautiful, he is faceless.

He is a mirror of our hidden self.

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#3—David Cronenberg on *The Brood*; Stephen King on Kubrick and *The Shining*; Matheson Pt. 2; *Kolchak the Night Stalker* article and episode guide; Jack (*It Came from Outer Space*, *The Creature*) Arnold remembers; *Arabian Adventure*; *Tales of the Unexpected* previews; Mike Sullivan FantasticArt; *ALIEN* poster art by Barclay Shaw.

#4—Aliens of *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*; Robots of *The Black Hole*; Film femme Caroline Munro; Herschell Lewis "The Wizard of Gore," *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *King Kong* and *Curst of the Demon* behind the scenes; On the set of *'Salem's Lot*; Miachel Hague FantasticArt; Warrior Robots from *Astro Boy* to *Voltus V* plus Robot poster.

#5—Carpenter and Hill on *The Fog*; *Saturn 3*'s SF horror; Bert Godron's *The Coming*; *Jason of Star Command*'s monsters; *Galactica*'s Cylon Secrets; Behind the Scenes of *THEM!*, *Son of Kong* and *Village of the Damned*; Dennis Anderson FantasticArt; Pull-Out Bonus— 21" x 32" Faeries Posterbook.

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#7—*The Shining* preview; Director William Lustig, stars Joe Spinell and Caroline Munro and FX man Tom Savini on *Maniac!*; Inside Bob Short's effects factory and *The Terror Factor*; Chris Walas' alien creations for *Galaxina*; Disney's *Watcher in the Woods* previewed; Vincent Price, Pt. 2; The Hitchcock Legacy, Pt. 1; Hammer's *Captain Kronos* and *Curse of Frankenstein*; and Chuck Jones: The Great American Animator.

#8—We go too far with gut-wrenching pix from *ZOMBIE*; John Carpenter Interviewed; Gary Kurtz on *The Empire Strikes Back*; Jim Danforth & David Allen; *The Hearse*; The Monster Maker—Paul Blaisdell, Pt. 1; Scatman Crothers on *The Shining*; Hammer's *Horror of Dracula*; *Force Five* animated preview; and George Pal: Sci-Fi's Best Friend.

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A conversation with the three animators who will soon give us the history of

FAERIES

By ROBERT GREENBERGER

The formula for producing successful animated television specials always changes. When *Faeries* makes it to CBS sometime after January 1, 1981, the combination will have involved three freelance animators (two veterans of the business and a talented newcomer), a successful art book that was on the best-seller list for a number of months, and an unusually strong devotion to quality.

Lee Mishkin, Fred Hellmich and Norton Virgien came together to tackle the project as a part of Tomorrow Entertainment's animated special package. Other animators were working on an adaptation of the equally successful *Gnomes* book. Because of contractural obligations, that project must air first and it has only recently been completed as this is written.

The *Faeries* book, Mishkin said, is "A pseudo-natural history about faeries and its got pictures of dozens and dozens of different kinds of faeries, accompanied by a fairy-tale text.

"The thing about the book was that it doesn't have a plot. It's just a lot of little descriptions about fairies. It was felt that we had to come up with a plot into which we would use as many of the creatures from the book as we possibly could."

"We were under very strict instructions," he added, "to stay as close as possible to the art style and the general feeling of the book."

Designer Alan Aldrich, known for work on *The Illustrated Beatles Song Books*, was flown in from England to work on character designs and the general story.

Fred Hellmich, a 24 year veteran with Disney, worked on the actual drawing and supervision of the animation. He said, "We had to ameliorate Alan Aldrich, so we had a problem: how do we get everyone satisfied? The people in the book were done with beautiful academic type drawing, certainly not the way Aldrich draws.

"We solved the situation by letting him set up the backgrounds where the environment took place because that wasn't clearly defined in the book itself.

"It was a problem of selling it to our executive producer (Thomas Moore). The

Fir Dirrig, with a few extra arms, entertains the trio of Puck, Oisin, and goofy Kobold as they prepare for their debut.

"Animation films are becoming more competitive once again with live action movies. It's the cost of the live action movies and their astronomically rising costs. It was said that if Fantasia *were done today it would cost the same as* Apocalypse Now."

Oisin, the only human in the story, helps Kobold navigate his way across the water. Puck watches, enjoying the sight.

network people certainly wanted to see the book reflected in the show, and they were also quite insistent on the structure of the personality of the hero, Oisin, who we had drawn as a 30 year old person. They felt it would be more powerful in a faerie tale environment to present him as a young boy. You could react to him as a child."

Virgien commented that the most difficult and most fun part of the project were these early stages of development. "The story was being written at the same time the characters were being designed. We went through three different versions of the storyboards.

"First we had Oisin as a James Bond/ Burt Reynolds kind of tough guy. We then realized the problems of animating him and with each version he got younger until he wound up being 14 or 15."

Hellmich described some of the fun involved in this kind of special. "Everyone likes a heavy, actually. When you're drawing a mean, villainous character . . . they've got more personality. The good guy has to waltz through the picture and be there—like a man in the ballet set-up, he just holds the girl.

"In this case, we had the same problem with Oisin as a middle-aged man. But as a boy, things could happen to him: he could fall, he could become adventurous, he could fight, he could do all the things a supposed goody-two shoes guy wouldn't do."

When all the dust settled around the plans, the story turned out like this:

While hunting, Oisin follows a deer that leads him to a mushroom cluster. The mushrooms turn into faeries and dance before him. The faeries explain that they are in danger and only a mortal can save them. It seems that the faerie king animated his shadow which quickly occupied a throne at Squalor Webb and began a war for control of the faeries. He also wanted to marry the Princess.

Through a magic ring, Oisin joins the faeries and finds the shadow. Illuminated by a candle, Oisin's shadow combats the King's in the final showdown.

Somewhere between five and 10 animators were used for the half hour special. Mishkin explained that "one of the most difficult things to find in our business, is somebody who could draw a pretty girl well. Fortunately, Freddie is one of the few people who can do it.

"During the old days at Disney, the animators used to be specialists. Somebody who could draw Mickey Mouse well was a Mouse Man. Somebody who could draw Donald Duck was a Duck Man, and so on. We found a young girl animator who was good at drawing pretty girls. The first time Freddie saw the pencil tests, he said, 'Hey, we've got a Girl Man!'

"I think we've got the only female Girl Man in the business."

Mishkin went on to describe the half hour format as somewhat constraining. The story, he said, could easily have been expanded to one and a half hours. "The thing that has stood us in good stead in

"Everyone likes a heavy . . . When you're drawing a mean, villainous character . . . they've got more personality. The good guy has to waltz through the picture and be there—like a man in the ballet set-up, he just holds the girl."

Our intrepid heroes are on the run, pursued by unspeakable horrors, unleashed by the Shadow King. Will they survive?

that regard is that we have all spent a good number of years doing television commercials where you have, frequently, a very complicated story to tell in 20 or 30 seconds. And that kind of experience really teaches you how to make every line count. Had it not been for that, I don't think we would have come close to getting our story across in half an hour."

Virgien said they originally were going to ask CBS for an hour but decided against the move. Hellmich explained that "this is not one of those shows where you have a chance to yawn. There's so much happening, you'll be panting because every sequence is an action sequence. We don't have one where you have a chance to relax.

"Disney always had a sequence where you could go out and get popcorn . . . we don't have that"

Virgien added that given a choice between too much time, too little story and the opposite, he would always go with too much story and too little time.

The process the animators used is the full animation process used for Disney movies. There are 24 frames per second and each character moves fully, as opposed to Saturday morning "limited" animation. Mishkin said the group was experimenting with making better use of color.

"In the first place," he said, "you can't have a successful television show that is all a downer or that is all happy and cheerful. If you're going to use gray, cool type colors to establish a depressing mood, there must have been a time in the film where they were happy, cheerful, bright colors for them to contrast to.

"Generally that's what we're doing. We're not using bright colors at all. Most of our colors are much more grayed down than the color you usually see in an animated film. The general color look of our film is going to be pretty special. We've gotten a lot of groans from the people whose job it is to actually apply the colors."

Mishkin's daughter, Elise, also played an important part in the animation process. There are several dance sequences in the show and as Mishkin put it: "It is difficult for a fat old man like me or a thin, old man like Freddie to really work out a good looking, graceful dance.

"In this case, I had my daughter, who is a very accomplished dancer and choreographer, come in for the purpose of working up a dance step. We set up our videotape system and played some of the music we had for the picture and she worked out dance steps that was reference for us. We didn't trace off the photographs of her dancing [the process known as rotoscoping, as seen in Ralph Bakshi's *Lord of the Rings*] but we did use her dancing as reference so the dancing in the picture is real, grown-up dancer-type dancing, not Bugs Bunny tap-dancing."

Mishkin also felt that cartoon characters used exaggerated actions and broader movements so they couldn't be expected to act like people. The use of rotoscoping, he felt, makes the animated character look mild.

From the darker images come Fir Dirrig, not your typical picture of a faerie.

Animation: Today and Tomorrow

Quite a lot has been written lately about the current state of animation. During our conversation with the animators, their thoughts turned towards where the field is headed. With the start up at the old Warner Bros. studios and announcement of four movies being produced by Ralph Bakshi, animation seems to be on its way again as a major force in the entertainment business.

Here now is an uninterrupted conversation the animators had on the subject:

HELLMICH: Here's an interesting sidelight, Bob. Hanna-Barbera is just finishing *Heidi*. It's been an eight year project and they are anticipating doing an *American Pop* (Bakshi's latest film which is a serious view on the growth of popular music) also. I don't know if it is relative or related to what Bakshi has, but some of the same personnel are at HB now.

MISHKIN: Animation is kind of going through a rebirth of the old school of animation. There are a lot of projects in production now that are really extremely, fully realized. Richard Williams' *The Thief* has taken him years and there's one in Canada that they have many high hopes for and they speak eloquently about.* I have a very strong feeling that animation is about to be born again.

This Saturday morning crap that's being done by HB isn't all of it. They are also trying to get into features through Taft (their owners) which is evidently letting them spend more extravagantly than when I was at Disney. They've been on *Heidi* for years. They have an elite group that's untouchable while the majority of the crap that runs through the plant are done by outside personnel.

VIRGIEN: People see animation like the natives at Easter Island. There are all those heads there and no one knows how it's done. You can't have a *Pinochio* if the commitment isn't there.

MISHKIN: Our problem as businessmen is that when we see a problem, instead of the traditional American businessman saying, "How can we do this cheap?" we say, "How can we stay up all night for six days in a row and make it a little bit better?"

HELLMICH: You have to put in that personal conviction and have pride in the craft and do it the way it should be done as opposed to a specific economic bracket.

VIRGIEN: Animation films are becoming more competitive once again with live action movies. It's the cost of the live action movies and their astronomically *rising* costs. It was said that if *Fantasia* were done today it would cost the same as *Apocalypse Now* [which cost about $40 million]. But today the costs to make *Apocalypse Now* are escalating fantastically.

MISHKIN: It's more a matter of economics than anything else. With Saturday morning television you have that huge quantity of time to fill up, and while the amount of money they have to fill it up seems large, when you break it down to how much money per minute there is, there just isn't enough money to devote the love and attention to it.

HELLMICH: There's the time factor too. Getting all that out, so much quantity to get out in one half year . . . you just can't do it well.

VIRGIEN: Look at how much just Hanna Barbera puts out. 8 half hour series and there are 15 episodes each so that's 93 half hours they have to produce in five months.

HELLMICH: The studios find it cheaper to go overseas and set up studios and have it done there and let the American labor force, with its cost figures, that are pretty high, be eliminated.

We are better in our profession, yet, the time factor forces them to go to Hong Kong or Taiwan.

MISHKIN: What I do think will happen, not that Saturday morning children's television will improve very much, but there will be more and more, let's say, Wednesday evening adult animation on. There will be more of the quality kind of animation available and people will no longer have the conclusion that the animation on Saturday morning is the only kind that can be done.

HELLMICH: The old Disney approach of teaching someone how to do it has been corrupted by HB, because they have to turn-out performers within one season. These people assume they are "animators" but they aren't. They are merely animating poses, one after the other and putting in timing charts. So the old process of teaching good animation isn't being done at Disney any more.

They're taking artists from art schools and trying to get their feet wet very quickly.

MISHKIN: Use of the word 'performer' in referring to an animator is one I find interesting. We all feel very strongly because the highest achievement an animator can aspire to is to have his characters *act*.

And we're all very much concerned with our little animated characters as actors. We find that we will frequently do something over or change something that works perfectly well for the reason that somehow the emotional content wasn't conveyed quite to our satisfaction.

That's something that is almost totally ignored by people who have the problem of grinding out vast quantities of animation in a relatively short time. But that's where the real fun in this business is. If you can't do that, the hell with it.

*A Nelvana Productions feature film, tentatively titled *Drats!*

Postal Zone

(continued from page 6)

The next time you speak to John Carpenter, I have something else that no one has asked him before—about his involvement with one of my all-time favorite TV movies, *Zuma Beach* starring the one and only Suzanne Sommers. The story of the film is credited to John Carpenter and William Schwartz, but in all the articles I have read on John Carpenter, I've never seen it mentioned!

Larry G. Coulter
P.O. Box 88
Mount Sterling, IL 62353

The Starloggers (picture lumberjacks with space helmets) were unable to squeeze Mr. Carpenter into #39, which was their action-packed TV preview issue. The Carpenter piece does appear in #41, now available as a STARLOG back issue. We hope you didn't miss it on the stands. Reached on the set of Escape from New York, *Carpenter sends word that, while he did write the first draft of* Zuma Beach, *it was extensively re-written, and the final film bears little resemblance to his original script. But we're sure all the Carpenter completists will thank you for that bit of info.*

FANGOR NON-FAN

Dear Fanged Fellows,
. . . What is this Count Fangor stuff? For the past several issues I have watched your magazine devote full color page after full color page to the antics of that stunted mockery of vampirism, Count Fangor.

While the humor and artistry that goes into this strip is more than passable, I can't help but feel that the page could be better used for color photos of our favorite frights. So what about it? Get on the stick!

Bruce Afran
467 Linden Drive
East Meadow, NY 11554

Since the Count's unholy contract will be up for renewal fairly soon, we'd very much like to know how the majority of our readers feel about the monster of mirth . . . we'll be looking to the mail.

Fangor Thanks

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . I can't believe it! I won the contest! That Fangor mask is terrific, beautiful! I've read every book you've printed and now after entering two contests, I won! So I had to write all of you and thank you.

I'm fourteen and I had to thank you, not just for the mask, but for the mag. That coverage of *Motel Hell* was great.

William J. McCrani Jr.
4753 Dixon Road
Lizolla, GA 31052

You're welcome.

Fripped Out

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . I just thought I'd tell you what a great magazine you have. Your covers are the best I've ever seen!!! As Robert Fripp says, "people have waited 20-30 years to see and hear what we're seeing and hearing today." The only thing I can complain about is "NOT ENOUGH GORE!!! WE NEED MORE GORE!!!"

Also, though my city gets most of the big flicks, I have yet to see *Maniac* shown here. I have been waiting anxiously.

Wink
1031 South Sullivan
Seattle, WA 98108

Part of the delay in the release of Maniac *is attributable to the ratings board. Thanks to the distributor, Analysis Films, that problem has been resolved. The movie will go out unrated and uncut, beginning in February. We caught an advance screening, and feel obligated to point out that, while gore-freaks like yourself might find it satisfactory, the storyline is a bit . . . lacking.*

Still More On *The Shining*?

Dear Fango,
. . . I was all set to write you a letter with the final, definitive analysis of *The Shining* phrased in a few concise (but brilliant) paragraphs. But now that I find myself here in *The Postal Zone*, before your millions of readers, I've gone all shy.

Charles S. Murray
Glendale, CA

CORRECTION

In the last issue of FANGORIA, proper copyright credit was inadvertantly left off of the production art for the Conan *movie. All art for that article is copyright 1980 by* Conan Properties Incorporated.

BACK ISSUES

#1—Backwinding Super-8 Film; Foreground Miniature Technique; Aerial Brace Construction.

#2—Spaceship Modelmaking; Blood Makeup; Smoke Generator; Light Beam Effects; Making an SF Logo.

#3—Robot Construction; Developing an Animation Style; Fluid Art Animation; Electronic Special Effects;

#4—Aerial Image Optical Printer: Construction; Wire Armatures; A-B Rolling; More Electronic Special Effects; Fog and Mist Effects.

#5—Aerial Image Optical Printer: Usage: Widescreen Super-8; Slit Scan Effects; Gleaming Eyes for Stop-Motion Models.

#6—Amazing Electronic Gadgets—Cheap; Bring Your Alien to Life—Latex Masks; Basic Editing Techniques; Invisible Man Effects.

#7—Basic Cartoon Animation; Claymation; Kaleidoscope Effects; Profile: Santostephano

#8—Video Tape Transfers; Reverse Filming Effects; Lab Services; Profile: Vitous & Antonucci; *Clash of the Titans* Preview.

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Cosmic

(continued from page 18)

since the creature was very active, Craig and Mike had to keep tabs on the status of his body hair throughout the day. We couldn't have it falling off during a strenuous scene. That was a really hard assignment. It took almost a day of one man's work to just prepare the hair and lay up the various mats for one, single makeup session. And we shot like that for many, many days."

Meanwhile, back in New York, Jessup's rubbery sense of metaphysics progressed . . . slowly. "Things were getting a bit confusing at this time," Smith understates. "After we designed the third, open mouthed suit for the tank scene, it was decided that, in order to have a camera zooming down the mouth, we needed a much bigger mouth. I was asked to construct a very large head that would have a mouth as big as a honeydew melon. The fact would be somewhat more abstract that the one on the third suit so, in essence, this was the fourth stage of this transformation. The mouth would have a long gullet and the camera would go through it. Then, they'd work in the special effects."

At one point, Russell wanted to zoom in on the face in a whirlpool effect and, so, a twenty foot whirlpool made out of transparent mylar was built. The camera was rigged to slide down the rotating plastic funnel and zip into the mouth of Smith's oversized creation. The experiment produced mixed results, according to Smith. Before they shot it, they killed the idea of the camera going down the mouth. So, this whole exceedingly complicated whirlpool effect could have been shot with a lifesized head and effects on a much smaller scale.

"Meanwhile," he laughs, "back at the rubber suits, we're still working our butts off. We bring out these large moving boxes filled with the three or four modles of each suit and makeup out to Hollywood. One of the first things we did on the coast was try out the first suit in water. I had actually put Bill Hurt into my bathtub because I wanted to make sure he wouldn't bob up and down like a cork. I was also concerned about the problems of drying out a foam rubber suit after a single day's shooting. I was able to get it dried out in a sort of laundry extractor. That got the water out of it. I dried it out the rest of the way myself and retouched the paint on it. It didn't shrink too much but it was a hell of a problem.

"At this point, Ken decides that the figure that emerges from the water shouldn't be murky at all but glowing radiantly. Now, a rubber suit just can't radiate and glow. So, Ken decides to build the entire lab set with a plexiglass bottom lit from below so that we'll get a good glow. At considerable expense, they got one inch plexiglass and built an elevated set that was really a tank. The supports were made of plexiglass, so there'd be no shadows from the lighting below. In the center of this set was a well that was deeper than the floor so that Bill could effectively emerge from beneath the water.

"So, we put Bill into one of our suits and put him into the well. The suit became so saturated with water that when Bill emerged, it began to tear. And Bill, being a very enthusiastic performer, began gesticulating wildly and the whole thing began to tear. It was, generally speaking, a disaster. Craig and I were terrified. We dried out the suit and realized that all the suits had to be reinforced. We glued elastic webbing inside. It cut down on the flexibility but it strengthened the suits.

"OK. One problem down. Next, we find that the light coming from below changed the color of the suits on camera. They no longer looked flesh color. They looked green. We had to repaint the suits to adapt to all these new conditions.

"Then, we ran into another problem. Nobody had really thought about how poor Bill was going to perform this scene emerging from a slippery plexiglass tank in a rubber suit. He had nothing to hold onto. They had a few concentric steps down in the well but they weren't too effective. I had a set of wooden stairs built and worked out a whole method by which Bill could choreograph his moves without killing himself.

"Now, we have Bill emerging from the tank with the light shining from below. Well, the suit didn't glow at all, the floor did."

After experimenting disastrously with glowing mechanical Jessups, director Russell's solution was to paint the suits white. The white coating, however, effectively obliterated much of the suits' detail.

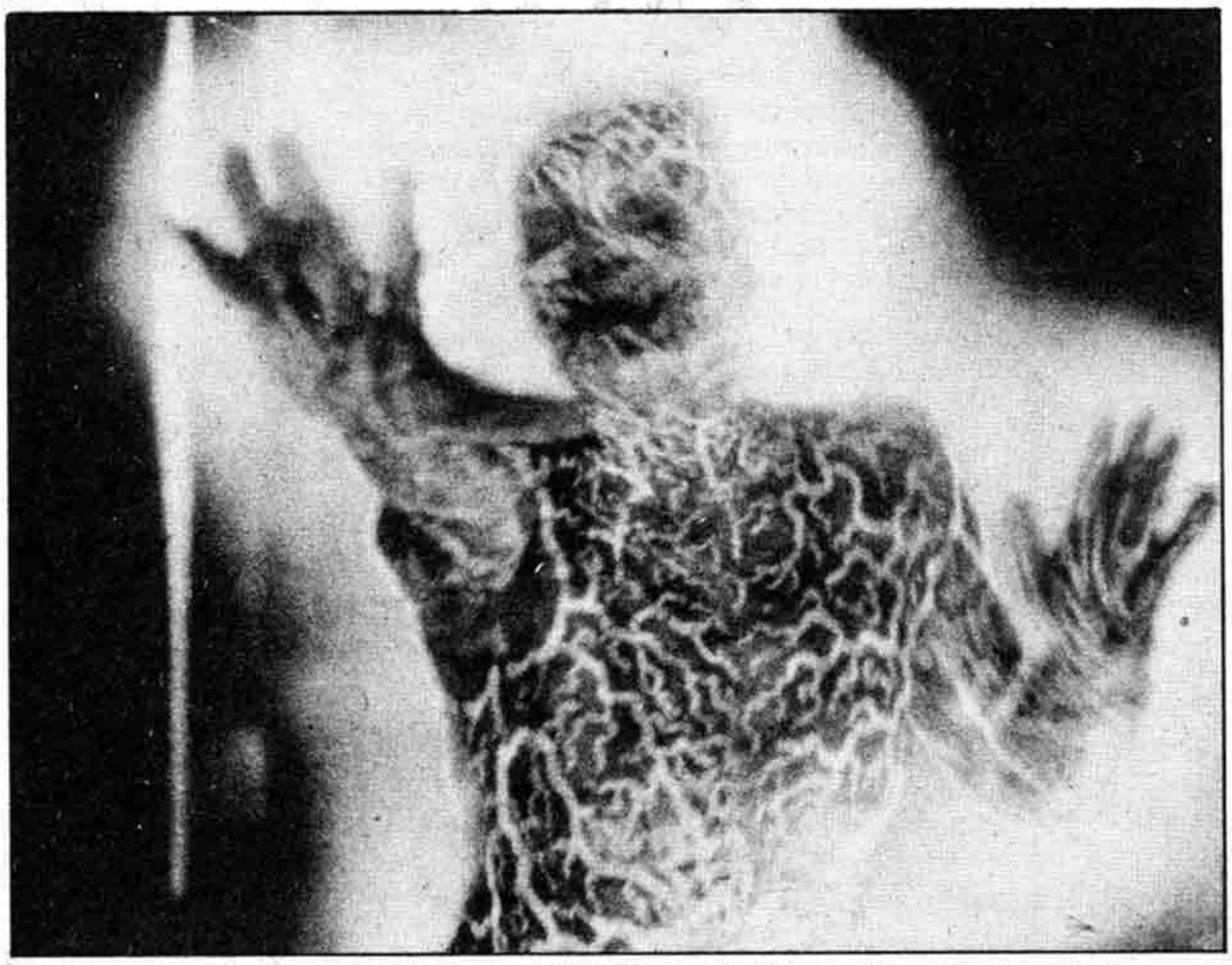
"We had spent so much time worrying about the tank scene," Smith smiles, "that no one thought about Bill in the final transformation scene. Most of our attention had been directed towards Blair Brown. We threw out a lot of ideas. At one point, we were going to have an exploding belly on her. Her transformation was going to be truly grotesque as opposed to what was finally done.

"Eventually, we came up with two suits for her. One was based on an idea Ken got from looking at *Gray's Anatomy*. It was a clear suit showing all her muscles and veins. Her skin was gone, replaced by a clear, jelly like substance. Ken didn't like that because he felt the suit made her look too fat. We also used our cracked suit, a suit showing cracks in her skin with a glowing molten substance beneath.

"For Bill, we wound up using the original tank room suit with the shriveling arm and a big, grotesque one. It was a last-minute decision. I think we came up with it the day before we shot the scene. I didn't mind since nothing was making any sense in that scene anyhow."

Smith sighs audibly. "And all this started with the construction of a couple of moles . . ."

Just whatever happened to those moles, anyhow? "Oh, we came up with a couple of great ones, he says. "We constructed bladders out of the urethane rubber. They were extremely elastic. We developed a whole new technology for making very thin bladders that could conform to whatever surface they had to be used on. Having this new technology, I could make this mole effect, this skin bubbling across the body, by having a series of overlapping bladders inflate sequentially in an undulating progression. That made it possible to do it actually using the actor. What this means is that we had to make a foam latex



The "cracked" suit as it appears in the film, with Ferren's opticals added.

skin that would cover actor Bill Hurt's forearm, let's say, that would only have one seam in it. That's fairly complicated. We solved all the problems, though. The only thing I'm unhappy about is that, in the film, the effects aren't used as well as they could have been as far as photographing them is concerned. Especially in one scene where Bill's brow begins to expand. A terrific effect that I feel was badly handled. Ken also wanted maximum inflation for the bladders which I think lessens the reality of the effect on the screen.

After over a year on *Altered States*, Smith called it quits and returned to his home in New York while Russell and his optical crew gave the film its final sheen. Being somewhat of a workaholic, Smith then immediately acted as a consultant for the forthcoming ESP-wars film, *Scanners*. Eventually, at the behest of director David Cronenberg, Smith appeared on the set for the climatic last scene.

"I developed a whole new bladder effect for *Scanners*," Smith says proudly. "The scene involves inflation but not with air but blood. I had to design bladders that would appear to be strange blood blisters. We used plastic appliances, not rubber. The bladders in *Altered States* were covered with foam latex skin and when they bloated they seemed to be bubbles on the skin itself. Here, the bladders were hollow and made out of clear plastic. They were inflated with blood so that you could see the blood rushing into the skin. The appliances would then bleed. The blood seems to rise to the surface of the skin and, then, ooze out. That was quite complicated."

Smith brings the interview to a close, talking of plans to fly to Hollywood in a week for a short business trip. Genuinely fascinated with his craft, he allows his *Altered States* verbal horror story to end with, what amounts to, a spoken wink.

"The interesting thing about all this mole stuff is, that since I pass along all my findings to my friends, Rick Baker has incorporated some of my technologies into his werewolf picture [*An American Werewolf in London*, produced by John Landis], for the transformation scene. He, in turn, passed the word to Rob Bottin for *his* werewolf picture [Avco Embassy's *The Howling*]. The irony of all this is that their pictures might be seen by audiences before mine! I want to lay claim to this process right here and now."

Smith concludes the latest episode in his three and a half decade career with a chuckle. "That's all right. I'll steal from them the next time . . . just kidding."

Editor's Note: When Ed Naha spoke with Dick Smith, the makeup artist had not seen a final version of the movie. When he did, Smith called Naha to give him the following statement which we are printing to put a fitting cap on the interview.

"I now have a better perception of the frustrating conceptual changes that have occurred on this film. When the production started, I presumed that the tremendous bodily transformations of the actors would be done with optical effects. During the early meetings with Arthur Penn, I argued against the use of rubber prosthetic suits. Even when the suits were decided upon, I pleaded for optical enhancement of them. Ironically, I became more enthusiastic about what we were achieving with the rubber suits as work progressed. So, when much later on, Ken Russell changed or eliminated much of my work, I was bitterly disappointed. Now, I realized that when Ken was thrown into the production, he inherited a load of preconceptions which he accepted as practical but against his natural creative instincts. As he worked his way through the film, he kept shucking off the physical transformation approach, making it more optical. It was, in fact, the approach I originally thought to be the right one. I had become too attached to my own work however, to see what was happening. Now I believe that if Ken had started the production instead of Arthur our work together would have developed with greater agreement and sympathy and less wasted effort. I now have seen the film and find it original, exciting and brilliant. I am proud to be a part of it."

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Mother's Day

(continued from page 12)

mentioned finding a Con Edison bill for $3.15 from 1947. Kaufman remembered that and something else; "The only thing of note we found in the basement of the house. There were stores of empty gin bottles. We cleaned the place up and we made it filthy again."

Kaufman's sister Susan worked on the film as art director and carefully planned on just how to fill the house. "We sat down and made lists of exactly what was to be in every room," he said. Each room had a unique identity but signs of consumerism littered the entire house.

Kaufman stacked the boys' room, for example, with pop personality posters, Batman toys, a model of the starship Enterprise, teen magazines, records, and all the items that one can find in the stereotypical child's room. In this case, however, the items went to excess.

Kravitz said it took ten days and many truckloads to carry away everything after the shooting was completed.

According to the production notes for the film, no one was allowed to leave the location until filming was completed. It is said that Kaufman was the only person ever to stay in the house alone.

The movie's special effects were handled by Josie Peruso and Rob E. Holland. They had to simulate the usual score of cuts, blood and mayhem in addition to some unique sequences, such as the infamous "Drano" scene.

To simulate the effect of a corrosive drain cleaner being poured down Ike's throat, a mixture of cherry Pop Rocks, Bromo Seltzer and red dye was used. Pouring vinegar onto the mixture produced a rich, pink foam—and one of the film's most memorable shocks.

What shocked people the most because of its graphic realism was a scene where Abbey is lowering Trina out of a window in an escape attempt. The bundle she lowers has to be suspended in mid-air as Addley walks by, on the prowl for his brother. He stalks slowly and the weight of the bundle begins to take its toll on Abbey. There's a quick close-up of her hands as the rope begins to cut the skin and blood begins to drip.

Kravitz enthusiastically commented, "when we did a test with that scene with super-8 film, the palm of my left hand started to hurt me. I still remember sitting there in the office watching that first test of the make-up and special effects."

Casting was difficult for Kaufman too. For the part of Ike, the brawny, slow brother, Kaufman said he could have gone about casting two different ways. "We sent guys to gyms, we called up the National Football League and we scoured the city. We spent two and half months trying to find someone to play that part who was ugly and mean. We couldn't find anyone who was ugly and mean and who could act. We decided instead to go with a guy who we could make up physically. He was really the toughest guy to cast."

When Holden McGuire was cast in his first film role, they had to dye his hair orange, cut it in such a way that it looked like someone with plastic scissors did the job, apply make up to one eye to make it deformed, and give him false teeth to wear so he looked like he had certain birth defects. Both Kravitz and Kaufman had nothing but praise for the job McGuire did.

What's it all Mean?

"We tried some things that we believed were different in the horror genre. One was to have three dimensional characters," Kaufman said seriously. "In most films, like *Friday the 13th*, and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the characters are like, well, the Doctor is always the doctor. He looks and acts like the doctor.

"Our characters changed a bit I think. One woman was weak (Abbey) and she became strong and another (Trina) was strong and became weak."

As far as the antagonist was concerned, Kaufman claims not to have copped out on the audience. "In *Halloween* and *Friday the 13th* and these scores of other pictures made now, you don't see the killer. You don't see the person you're supposed to be scared of. I think to a certain extent that that is a cop-out. I think you can create a character on the screen that can be pretty frightening," he said.

The third thing to make *Mother's Day* unique is the humor. "Suspense is a process of getting people tense and then relaxing them. Instead of nothing going on, we decided to throw humor in to relax people," he commented.

His humor takes several forms including a wonderfully funny satire on the training scenes from *Rocky* and the running feud between Ike and Addley over which is better, punk or disco. (Kaufman commented that he doesn't like either music form. These days he listens to a lot of classical music after growing up to the sounds of the Beatles.)

If the movie had a theme song, it is Tommy Roe's "I Think We're Alone Now" which is played in a scene of the movie. Kaufman chose the music because of his own tastes in music and because the lyrics fit in very closely with the movie's theme. "There are lines in it—'I think we're alone now/There doesn't seem to be anyone around' and 'We're running just as fast as we can/Holding on to one another's hand'—that are very important to the action of the movie."

One other thing that makes the movie a significant addition to the glut of horror movies on the market today is that the movie has a subtle message to it. Kaufman explained, "What it was about was this was a family that lived in the woods and they were out of touch but I believe it was a good rendering of what backwoods people may be like nowadays. Society may intrude there, they still have radio and TV, they still get mail order catalogues . . . the pan at the beginning of the movie has Mother sitting and reading a Sears and Roebuck catalogue.

"We were talking about the effect of junk culture. Their house was full of it, John Travolta posters, Howdy Doody dolls, Sesame Street stuff, Batman, the Pink Flamingos in the front lawn. That's their life.

"This was Mother's perception of what society is about. She wanted to take, as she says in the beginning of the film, she wanted to take what was good from the city and the rest of it you can keep. This was her perception of what's good," Kaufman said.

All Kaufman says he set out to do was entertain people. "*Mother's Day* is entertainment. It has blood and guts for the blood and guts crowd, and a little bit of intelligent humor for the more intellectual audience," Kaufman added.

Coming Attractions

The next Charles Kaufman project will be another horror film. He doesn't see the need for a sequel although the door is open for one.

"I really never thought about doing television. I can't see it. There are all kinds of parameters there like stopping in the middle of the thing for commercials. The size of the screen is a problem. You can't show too much on commercial television, you can't scare them too much. If it was really scary, you couldn't show it on TV."

Kaufman and Kravitz both feel the fun is in the making of the pictures by themselves without the interference of the major studios. Chances are they won't be doing projects for the majors yet because they prefer total control over their movies as opposed to the "committee" method.

Meanwhile they await figures and comments on their first horror movie and plan for their future. For Kaufman this could mean sitting at home and looking at his refrigerator.

Editor Bob Martin was particularly interested in the contents of Kaufman's refrigerator and requested Kaufman be asked. The reply:

"You'd probably find beer. I don't cook a lot at home. I'm not married. I tend to eat out, I go to McDonald's and Burger King.

"It would probably be empty. Right now there is a jar of pickles, flour that is four months old, old tacos . . . Mike has the best refrigerator."

Kravitz admitted to being married and having plenty to fill his refrigerator. "I have a lot of vegetables that we buy and don't eat. We have milk, I have some butter, I have organic eggs, I have some frozen chicken soup that my mother gave me last year in case I get sick. I made some terrific spaghetti sauce . . ., " he told FANGORIA.

Finished with their lunch, the pair had to rush off to a meeting. It's safe to say that while Mother may be gone, horror fans have only begun to hear from Charles Kaufman.

Count Fangor

by Howard Cruse

I'M WRITIN' A LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS AN' ASKIN' HIM TO BRING ME A WHOLE CASE OF CHERRY-CENTERED CHOCOLATE BOG LEECHES THIS CHRISTMAS!
Scribble Scribble
HMM... SPEAKING OF SANTA CLAUS...
...I WAS JUST READING IN THE PAPER THAT HE'S ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO DOCTOR VON MAELSTROM'S CAMPAIGN TO WIPE VAMPIRES OFF THE FACE OF THE PLANET!...
©1980 O'Quinn Studios, Inc.
THEY QUOTE HIM HERE AS SAYING: 'AS ONE WHO HAS DEVOTED HIS ENTIRE CAREER TO SELFLESS ACTS OF GENEROSITY, ANNUALLY BRINGING HAPPINESS TO ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD, I HAVE NO USE FOR GHOULISH AND DISGUSTING CREATURES OF THE NIGHT!...'
Cruse
'...IN MY OPINION, OUR TROUBLED WORLD WOULD BE WELL RID OF SUCH VENOMOUS BLOOD-SUCKERS AND THEIR UNDEAD ILK...'
WELL, SOMETIMES YA GOTTA DEAL WITH JERKS IF YA WANNA GET YER CHOCOLATE BOG LEECHES...
I LIKE A LAD WHO UNDERSTANDS THE SYSTEM!
Scribble Scribble

MEANWHILE, THINGS LOOK FESTIVE AT DOCTOR VON MAELSTROM'S ABODE...

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MONSTER INVASION

Up-to-the-minute warnings of what's coming your way!

MOVIES

CONTAMINATION: Luigi *(Starcrash)* Cozzi's intergalactic thriller (mentioned in these pages as *Aliens Arrive on Earth* some months ago) will be releasing here in the states shortly—both New World Pictures and the Jerry Gross Organization have expressed an interest in obtaining U.S. distribution rights. According to reports from advance screenings, the film is a pretty exciting one; the alien invaders ooze a substance of a particularly sickening consistency that apparently causes human beings to explode shortly after first contact.

PHOTO COURTESY LUIGI COZZI

Lots of nasty little living things was waiting in those eggs, ready to leap out at you upon *Contamination's* release.

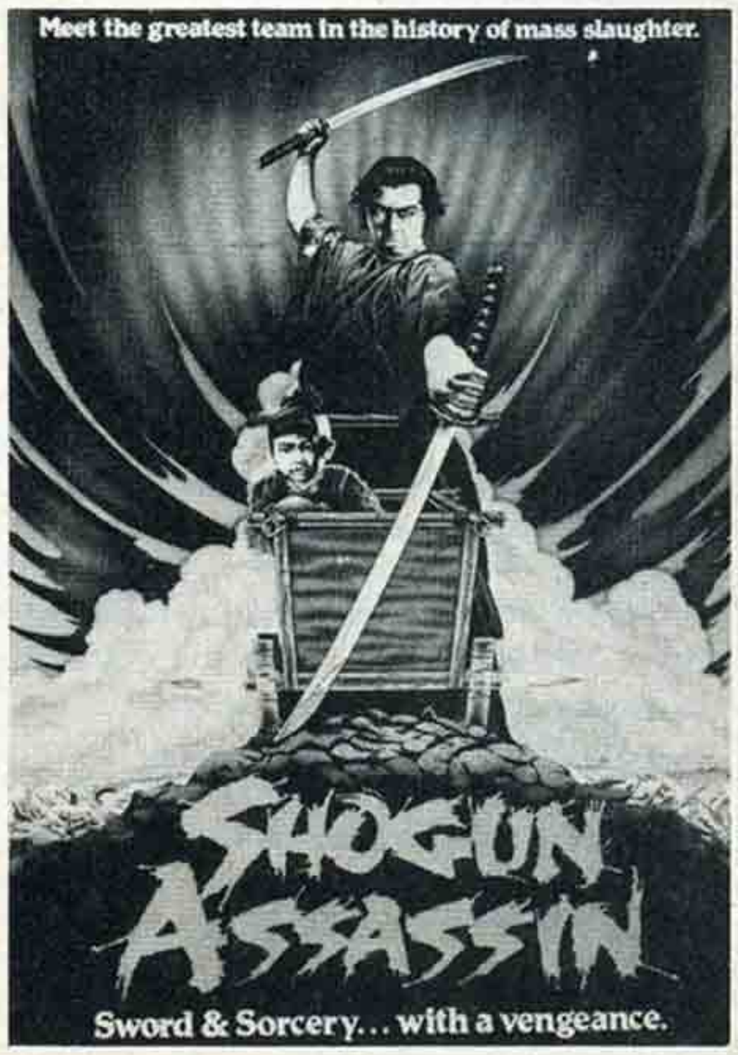
THE MONSTER CLUB: The "anthology" film directed by Roy Ward Baker, produced by Milton Subotsky and based upon the stories of R. Chetwynd-Hayes is now planned for a spring release in the U.S. As previously reported, the film will star John Carradine as Chetwynd-Hayes and Vincent Price as Eramus, a vampire with an interest in fiction. The film's first tale concerns Raven (James Laurenson), a kind-hearted but incredibly ugly fellow who falls in love with Angela (Barbara Kellerman), who is only interested in his wealth. The second story concerns young Lintom Busotsky, whose father (Richard Johnson) is a vampire. Lintom talks about his family problems to a local clergyman (Donald Pleasance), to his later regret. The final story concerns an egotistical film director (Stuart Whitman) who stumbles across a town populated entirely by ghouls (including Patrick Magee as an innkeeper), except for one lovely girl named Luna (Lesley Dunlop). The Club sequences will be enhanced by a number of Monster Rock musical numbers, including "Monsters Rule, O.K." by the Viewers, "Sucker For Your Love" by B.A. Robertson, "The Monster Club" by The Pretty Things and "The Stripper" by Night, the last accompanied by a stripper who "takes it all off"—down to bare bones!

NEW YEAR'S EVIL: What's next, asked reader David Campione, *Groundhog Day?* Well, Hollywood has not yet run out of holidays, as you know if you've already seen this knife-killer epic starring Kip Niven as a blade-bearing berserker wearing a Stan Laurel mask, with Roz Kelly as the girl on the run. Director Emmett Alston has a number of other projects cooking at the same studio: Jill St. John in the medical thriller *X-Ray*, and *Lover's Lane*, which will star none other than Wayne ("Danke Schon") Newton.

LUCIO, LUCIO, LUCIO: Poe fans be warned! Lucio Fulci, the director of *ZOMBIE*, has completed another terror feature, this one based (loosely) on Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat*, and tentatively bearing the same title. Filming in London and Rome was completed at the end of September, but plans for distribution in America have yet to be made. Appearing in starring roles are Mimsy Farmer and veteran horror actor Patrick Magee. Fulci already has two further gruesome tales in preproduction, though all that's available just now are the titles: *The Beauty Killer* and *The Beyond*.

INSEMINOID: Principal photography on this outer-space thriller was completed this fall at Chiselhurst Caves in England. The story concerns an exploration team on a distant planet who stumble upon the den of a bizarre alien creature. The disturbed alien finds female crewmember Judy Geeson irresistable, and she becomes the first human being to be impregnated by a creature from out of space. However, the little critter inside her starts taking control, and she starts doing in her fellow crewmembers (which include Jennifer Ashley and Robin Clarke) in the traditional, one-by-one order.

SHOGUN ASSASSIN: With films like *The Big Brawl* and *The Octagon* drawing huge crowds to the theaters, it seems that a major martial arts revival is on the way. New World Pictures will be entering the field with *Shogun Assassin*, a Japanese picture stressing adventure, swordplay and graphic dismemberment. The story concerns Lone Wolf, serving the Shogun in the office of Official Decapitator, until the day the Shogun snaps his wig and orders that Lone Wolf's bride be killed. Lone Wolf leaves his civil service job to become an assassin-for-hire, and is declared a renegade by his former boss. With the Shogun's Ninja already hot on his trail, Lone Wolf accepts an assignment from a local clan to fight the Shogun's equally-evil brother, Lord Kiru. In the middle of all the fighting, Mr. Wolf still finds the time to be a loving father to his infant son, Daigaro. While the film's abundant violence is likely to provoke some revilement among the newspaper press, the thing to remember is that in Japan, this is considered a *children's* picture. In fact, Lone Wolf was created in the pages of a top-selling Japanese comic book, *Kozure Okami*.



ART COURTESY NEW WORLD PICTURES

Original character designs for the nasty villains of *The Demon Stone*.

THE BROTHERS HILDEBRANDT have two major projects in the works, both of which are direct outgrowths of their illustrated novel *Urshurak*, published last year. "We had put together a 30-minute presentation based on *Urshurak*," explains brother Greg, "and when we took it to the movie people, they all loved it—but they said it would cost about $145 million to make! It was just too big." So the twin brothers have developed two new projects, both stemming from characters and concepts introduced in *Urshurak*. One of these, *The Amazons of Zan-Dura*, will be published by Bantam Books as a follow-up to *Urshurak*; plans are to develop it as a film sometime after publication. But before that film starts, it seems likely that the brothers will already be at work on *The Demon Stone*, their own animated feature: "We worked in animation before, for about four years at one stage in our career," says brother Tim, "and we'll be glad to get back into it. It was our first love."

HELLNIGHT: Linda Blair makes her return to fright films in the next entry from Irwin Yablans' Compass International, to be produced by Bruce Cohn Curtis and directed by Tom De Simone. Blair plays one of several students hoping to be accepted for membership in a college sorority. As an initiation stunt, the young women are told to spend the night in an abandoned house, said by some to be haunted. Sure enough, there is an evil "presence" in the house, which proceeds to knock the intruders off, in traditional one-by-one order, until Blair is left alone to make a stand against the shadowy killer.

SWAMP THING: Under development at Avco Embassy Pictures is a film treatment of DC Comics' swamp monster-hero. Those familiar with the Len Wein-Berni Wrightson creation may recall the story: Dr. Alec Holland and his wife Lisa were working on a bio-regenerative formula for the America government and the good of all mankind. When they refused to sell their secrets to a criminal organization known as the Combine, their lab was bombed. Lisa died immediately, but Holland, coated with the formula, made it to a nearby swamp.

The chemicals, mixed with the stagnant waters of the swamp, turned Holland into . . . a thing (a Swamp Thing, in fact). Talking through his mishapen feature was a cause of great pain, his walk became a massive lumber, and wherever he went he left a trail of muck. In his battles with the bad guys, he discoverd that he had a distinct advantage—the bio-regenerative formula gave him the ability to grow as many arms as the villains could rip off.

Bernie Wrightson and Len Wein created the character as a short tale in DC's *House of Secrets*, but reader reaction prompted DC to launch a regular *Swamp Thing* comic, which lasted for 24 issues; the first nine now command high prices in collectors' circles.

Should the film project actually come about,

there is considerable doubt as to whether Len Wein or Berni Wrightson will see any money from the deal. Under the contracts operative at the time of *Swamp Thing*'s creation, Swamp is totally owned by the DC folks. Any payment made to the creative team as a result of the film will be filed in a slim folder marked "Magnanimous Corporate Gestures."

Wes Craven *(Last House on the Left)* has been signed to direct.

RECYCLED CLASSICS: Two very unusual feature films have appeared on the horizon, both of them cut and pasted from classic shorts of the 1930s.

The first of these is now complete, and could be released any time now. Titled *Hooray For Betty Boop*, the film is composed of excerpts from dozens of Max and Dave Fleischer's Boop cartoons, carefully pieced together to follow a new script written by producer Dan Dalton. The original black and white animation has been colored by hand, frame by frame, and the original soundtracks have been abandoned in favor of new music (by writer-producer Dalton) and dialogue spoken by Boop sound-alike Victoria D'Orazi and Tom Smothers as Pudgy. Judging from the few clips we've seen, Boop purists will be more than a little upset by Dalton's treatment

of the work of the late Fleischers.

A little further in the future is *Dance of the Cuckoos*, which is being edited from 75 different shorts made by Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy for the Hal Roach Studios. This project is headed by Alan Douglas of the Douglas Brothers Corporation. Again, all the old black and white footage is being converted into color, this time by a brand new process: each scene is transferred to videotape, each object on screen is electronically color-enhanced, a computer maintains color consistency throughout the scene and the videotaped color is then transferred back to film and combined with the original print. Computer technology will also allow Douglas to tinker with the soundtrack, *without* altering the dialogue. Douglas promises that the comedians' voices will not be ovedubbed, and that all comedy sequences will appear "in context."

PHOT: C1980 ORION PICTURES

Boorman on his masked Mordred: "A beautiful yet terrifying figure. You take the mask off, and there is this baby-faced boy. It's the opposite of reality where any child's face is itself a mask."

EXCALIBUR: John Boorman's Arthurian fantasy (previously reported in these pages as *Knights*) is now complete, and release is planned for April of 1981.

The film was shot in Ireland and stars Nicol Williamson as Merlin and Nigel Terry as Arthur Pendragon. The filming was something of a family affair for Boorman; his son Charlie portrays the young Mordred, his wife Katrina appears as the mother of Arthur and his daughter Telsche was production assistant.

The production, which may have a running time well over two hours, has been a pet project of Boorman's for years. Only the recent fantasy boom has allowed Boorman to raise the money for the project, while retaining total control.

According to a Boorman interview recently published in the British magazine *Sight and Sound*, "Merlin's story is about the coming of consciousness. When Man became conscious, moved into a rational period, he lost his magic. So, in the film, Merlin is disappearing, fading out as rational man takes over the world. The magic is still there, but it's no longer part of the foreground, it has passed into the unconscious."

Indications are that the film will not have the sort of glamour associated with such productions as *Camelot* or *The Sword in the Stone*. Boorman has in mind a grittier, more realistic type of romance. The film's special effects are under the supervision of Wally Veevers, the British FX master behind many of the effects in *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

PHOTO: C1980 CROWN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

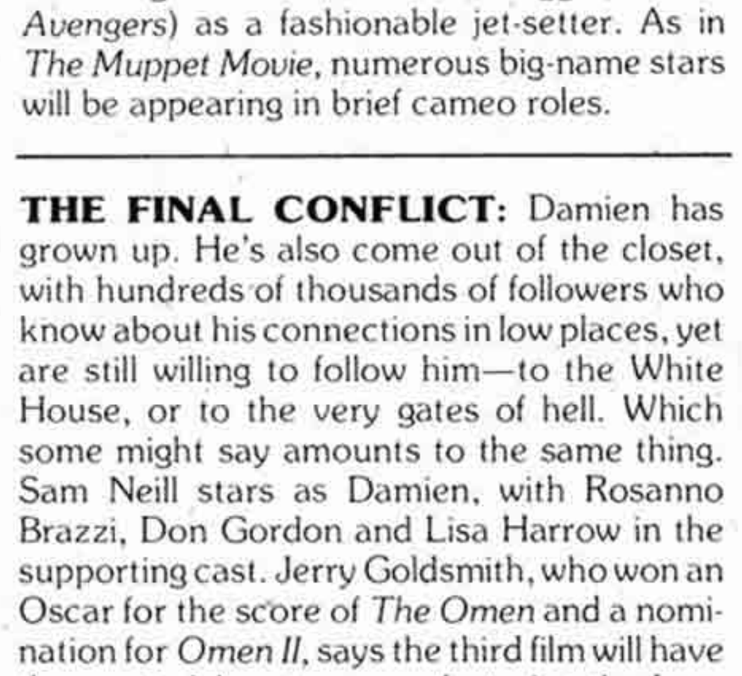
Two young stars start digging up some nastiness for your theater screen.

CAUTION: CHILDREN AT PLAY: "Many of the pictures I've seen lately are not much fun," says producer Alain Silver. "There are too many baby-sitter-killer films and strangers in the house with knives, very little exploration of stories. I like horror scripts to be novel, to surprise me, to shock me." Silver's current production could foot the bill quite nicely—it's a decidedly off-beat tale about a pair of telekinetically gifted youngsters who re-animate their father's corpse in an effort to wreak vengeance on his killers. Principal photography should be completed by the time you read this, under the direction of Patrick Regan, and a mid-81 release is planned.

THE GREAT MUPPET CAPER: The second Muppet feature film will be the first feature film directed by Mr. Muppets himself, Jim Henson. This is hardly a surprising move for Henson —he's always been a film fanatic, and was nominated for an Academy Award for a short film he made in the early 60's called *Time-Piece* (there wasn't a single Muppet in it, but the sole piece of dialogue—the word "help"—was spoken in a voice that later became Kermit). The "caper" of the title is a jewel robbery, promised to be the most outlandish heist in film history. The stars of the film are the men behind the muppets: Frank Oz (Miss Piggy, Fozzie), Dave Goelz (Gonzo),

Jerry Nelson (Floyd), Richard Hunt (Scooter) and Henson (Kermit). Live co-stars include Charles Grodin (of *Heaven Can Wait*) as a charming crook and Diana Rigg (of *The Avengers*) as a fashionable jet-setter. As in *The Muppet Movie*, numerous big-name stars will be appearing in brief cameo roles.

THE FINAL CONFLICT: Damien has grown up. He's also come out of the closet, with hundreds of thousands of followers who know about his connections in low places, yet are still willing to follow him—to the White House, or to the very gates of hell. Which some might say amounts to the same thing. Sam Neill stars as Damien, with Rosanno Brazzi, Don Gordon and Lisa Harrow in the supporting cast. Jerry Goldsmith, who won an Oscar for the score of *The Omen* and a nomination for *Omen II*, says the third film will have the most elaborate score, featuring the London Philharmonic and a 60-member choir. A March opening is planned.



Sam Neill as Damien, Lord of the Nasties.

Yes, we've received your reader polls and letters clamoring for more TV news in Monster Invasion. Unfortunately, there isn't any, except such depressing tidbits as: the *ALIEN* and *'Salem's Lot* TV proposals have slipped quietly into limbo; the wretched TV movie *Revenge of the Stepford Wives* got the desperately low rating that it deserved; and the ludicrous *Mr. and Mrs. Dracula* may be coming back as a full-blown TV series.

Horror on television seems certifiably dead these days. There have been valiant attempts—the *Night Stalker* series, the *Salem's Lot* special and the truly phenomenal success of the daytime series *Dark Shadows*—but despite these landmark successes, no one seems game enough to try any more.

And it's not just censorship. Feature films like *The Fury, Pirhana* and *Jaws* have been broadcast on network television with some remarkably intense scenes shown intact, or lightly edited. So why is network-originated programming so consistently gutless? Part of the reason may be the committee methods employed by the networks, particularly in the course of series development. The film studios have their committees as well, but the beauracracy is doubled for television, where both the production company and the network are able to fiddle with, approve or kill a project.

But be patient. *Something* will be forthcoming. We hope.

SATURDAY MORNING: Ah! The one aspect of television where fantasy reigns supreme! *TV Guide* recently published a series of articles on children's television that expressed a certain amount of shock and concern that there were still a few shows on the air with some actual *content*. Steve Gerber, the creator of *Howard the Duck* and currently the story editor for *Thundarr*, sent them the following letter, which we hope they will print. Here it is, just in case they don't:

TV Guide
Randor, PA
Sirs:

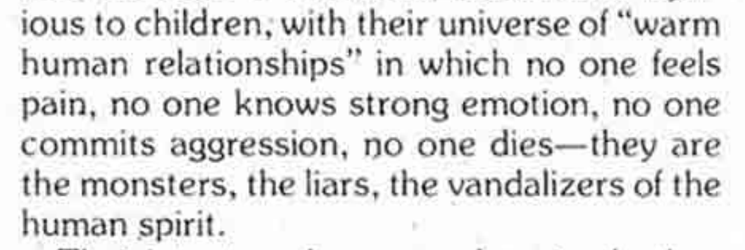
Your panel of experts is throttling children's television with the full length of its blue ribbon.

These people, with their parenting projects, their health book collectives, their pathetic literal-mindedness and their insistence upon reducing matters of the heart and mind to the manageable status of "issues" . . . these people could wind up obliterating not only children's programming, but also the soul and imagination of an entire generation.

The psychologists, not the writers, producers, directors, or even the network executives, are responsible for ruining the medium that brought Superman, Sky King, Fury, Commando Cody, et. al., into my childhood. The psychologists, with their absurd view that conflict, the basis of all drama, is somehow injurious to children, with their universe of "warm human relationships" in which no one feels pain, no one knows strong emotion, no one commits aggression, no one dies—they are the monsters, the liars, the vandalizers of the human spirit.

Their intent can be summed up simply: they want television to do for their children that Valium does for them.

As one who works in children's television, I know already that there is no basis for communication with these people. Their statistics are sacrosanct, their convictions unshakable. I only hope the viewing public can see past the sham and listen to that peculiar *whirring* sound, barely audible under the buzzwords: the sound of Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson and Louisa May Alcott spinning in their graves.



COMICS: Roy Thomas, the man who brought Conan to the comics, left Marvel and the black-maned barbarian some months ago. Thomas' first work for his new employers at DC is a tale reviving the Justice Society of America, to appear in editor Len Wein's *All-Star Comics*. Thomas also has a brand-new sword and sorcery character in development, which will appear under the editorship of Dick Giordano. It's been indicated that Ernie Cohen and Tony DeZuniga will be the artists on the project . . . Marvel's new Conan scripter, J. Marc DeMatteis, is working toward a better grasp on the character. He says there is a two-year gap in the Conan life story that will give him plenty of time to get acquainted with the chronology established by Thomas, deCamp, Carter, Wagner, Offut and (before we forget) Robert E. Howard. Conan's black and white magazine adventures are being chronicled by Michael "The Slasher" Fleischer . . . . The renewed popularity of the *X-Men* comic resulted in troubles between co-creators Chris Claremont and John Byrne. Seems there is some disagreement about who has the most creative input, and whether the credits properly reflect each man's contribution. Byrne has left *X-Men* and will be testing his mettle as scripter and penciller of *The Fantastic Four*, while Dave Cockrum, who helped reintroduce the mutant team several years

ago, will return to pencilling the X-Men's adventures . . . . Jack Harris is looking to revitalize DC's line of mystery comics, which he now edits. Part of Harris' strategy may be the revival of such horror heroes as *Deadman*, which would be written by Len Wein, the the *Spectre*, with "Slasher" Fleischer on script. Recent Hollywood interest in the *Swamp Thing* may bring about a revival of that series as well . . . . Frank Miller, whose writing and drawing on *Daredevil* gets more amazing by the month, has been assigned to pencil the arcane adventures of *Dr. Strange* as well . . . . Marvel is planning magazine adaptations of Ralph Bakshi's animated feature film *American Pop* and of the Lucas produced, Speilberg directed film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* . . . . And there'll be plenty of DC publications to tie-in with *Superman II*, opening June 26. Planned is a three-issue "miniseries" focusing on the El family, to which young Kal-El (Superman) belongs, and a detailed look at the Phantom Zone—its inhabitants, their criminal records and how they have harrassed Superman over the years. Another tie-in will show how many of the concepts and incidents in the film originated in the comics, with text by Michael "The Indexer" Fleischer.

Monster Invasions is edited by Robert Greenberger with contributions from Bob Martin and David P. Nichols.

SCANNERS

One of the most important duties on any magazine is the humble task of proofreading. Every once in awhile, some gruesome spelling error creeps into print, and it's our job to locate these little buggers and root them out. But we've never had a story so riddled with errors as the one that follows. Each of the words spelled in capital letters in the following story has all the letters it should have, but in a completely jumbled order! Now, we're awfully exhausted from getting this feature-packed issue onto your local newsstand—would you mind proofreading this article for us? The first 25 completely correct entries will receive an official *Scanner* T-shirt (NOT available in stores, and produced for promotional purposes only), PLUS a special surprise. After the first 25 winners, all correct entries received before February 25 will be tossed into a big box and 50 more winners will be chosen to receive a T-Shirt and surprise gift. Enter only once: NO DUPLICATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

To get you started and show you how it works, in the first statement the letters in CORN B. GREEN can be arranged to spell Cronenberg. Most (but not all) of the proper names to be found in #7 are mentioned elsewhere in this issue. The answer to #2 can be found in FANGORIA #3 or in the current STARLOG #43.

T-SHIRT CONTEST

A Twisted Tale

1. This contest is respectfully dedicated to horror film director CORN B. GREEN. (One word, proper name)
2. His first film, released in England as *Shivers*, was shown in the U.S. as HE MAY FIT ME WITH CORN. (Four words, film title)
3. His second film had audiences twisting their hair, so they called it BRAID. (One word, film title)
4. His third film, *Fast Company*, remains unreleased in the U.S., and his fourth left no one feeling HOT, BORED. (two words, film title)
5. Co-starring in that film were Samantha Eggar and I VEER OLDER. (Two words, proper name)
6. By this time, the world's greatest horror magazine had been launched, and the film was featured in the third issue of I FOR A NAG. (One word, magazine title)
7. With the release of *Scanners*, this magazine predicted that Corn B. Green would be acknowledged as one of the true greats of horror film, as well known as RAP CENTER, POOR HE, OR ME OR, CAVERN, ED TAN, CHUM NAG INN, and even A GOLD LIZ. (seven one-word solutions—six film directors' last names, and one horror film "star")

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Mighty Joe

(continued from page 32)

ample of O'Brien's design, Fulton's art work and Harryhausen's ability to breathe life into a piece of sculpture.

Because of union problems resulting from jurisdictional labor contracts after the war, O'Bie was forced to maintain unusually large crews. Four men functioned in a job previously manned by one. This, in addition to an enormous overhead accumulated during the project's time span on the lot, spiraled the final cost to $2.5 million, one million over the projected budget. Sadly, *Joe* could not recoup the expenditure and was subsequently sold for television release. During its initial run, *Joe* popped up on theater marquees unexpectedly and received mixed reactions from critics and audiences. Many thought the film was too loud; others found fault with the humor of the script. Still others frowned on the peculiarities of the stop-motion process—an old story. In truth, the humor in *Joe Young* had been pared down considerably when a sneak preview generated heavy criticism from audiences and studio personnel.

It Still Works

What remains of the comedy today *works*. The comic bits provided the necessary relief from the overwhelming special effects and busy action scenes. Take them away, and *Joe* becomes a trifle hard to swallow. It is, after all, a *fun* film. Armstrong plays O'Hara to the hilt, and much of his vaudevillean interplay with Flavin the cop is priceless. The film needed that, something the critics could not appreciate. It's important to realize that *Mighty Joe Young* could have been a *frightening* film, especially to children, to whom it was aimed. Few could dislodge the hilarious moment when the Polish hobo opens the rear of the truck, only to find a 10-foot gorilla blinking in bewilderment. It's a funny scene—the ape is as shocked as the bum, perhaps moreso. Still, it is essentially a jarring, *horrifying* encounter, one that might just as easily traumatized a child had Joe not been presented as a loveable animal and a poor soul. When the hobo screams and runs off "yelling like a banshee," he's really an emotional exhaust pipe for the audience. Cooper was well aware of the tricky balance between comedy and terror; if the scale tipped on either side, it was only his penchant for audacity bogging things down. Reluctantly, Cooper cut the film shortly before its July 1949 release to equalize and appease.

Despite those cuts, it is still Joe's infectious comic personaity that carries the film to its memorable finish. When Joe grabs the little girl teetering on the ledge in a grand display of heroics, there aren't many who wouldn't find themselves with goosebumps. Roy Webb's memorable score truly excells in those last reels—with agitato variations of *The Volga Boatman* in the tug-of-war sequence, and in the orphanage holocaust, scintillating crescendos tear us apart. Moments later, order is restored. Joe is back in Africa. So are Jill and Greg. Webb's orchestra swells into a heart-warming rendition of *Beautiful Dreamer* and we are told that all lived happily every after—reminding us in the end (in case we've forgotten) that this has actually been one great big fairytale—in the best Cooper-Schoedsack-O'Brien tradition.

CODA: A further retrospective look at MIGHTY JOE YOUNG by Paul Mandell will appear in CINEFANTASTIQUE magazine. A book on the subject is expected from the author.

Things
to come

So many great things are on the horizon that we'll never get them into a single issue! Since we haven't decided ourselves which stuff we'll be showing you first, here's a rundown of works-in-progress for #11 and beyond: Our first-ever interview with the Emperor of the Independents, George Romero! The (2nd) Return of Tom Savini! Another visit with Dick Smith! Oliver Stone's *The Hand*, John Boorman's *Knights*, Dan O'Bannon's *Dead And Buried*, Frank LaLoggia's *Fear No Evil* and Tobe Hoopers *Funhouse!* A series of Fantasy Films Femmes Fatale, including Elisabeth Brooks *(The Howling)*, and P.J. Soles *(Carrier, Halloween, Rock 'n' Roll High School)!* Tributes to William Castle, Terence Fisher and Mario Bava! An interview with terror writers Charles Grant and Ramsey Campbell! *Frankenstein* on Broadway! And, undoubtedly, more surprises of the sort you'd expect from the world's greatest horror film magazine!

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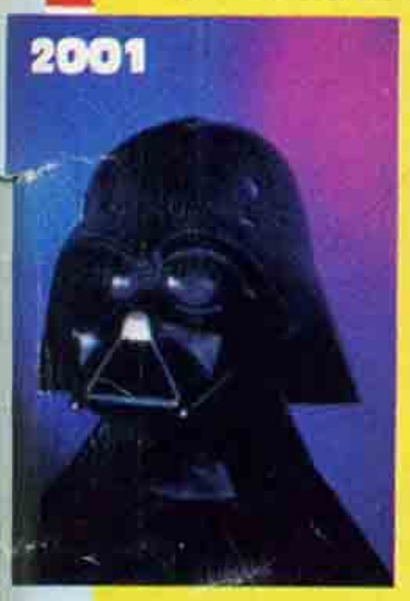

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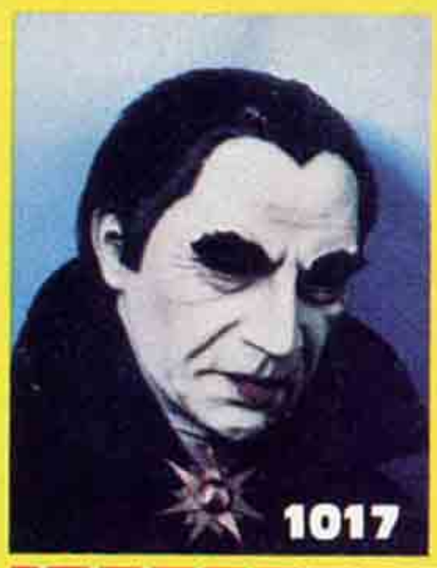

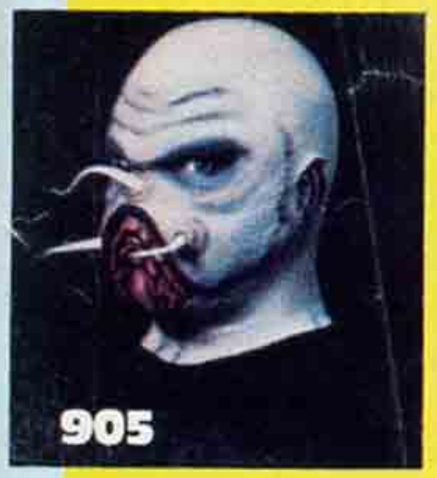

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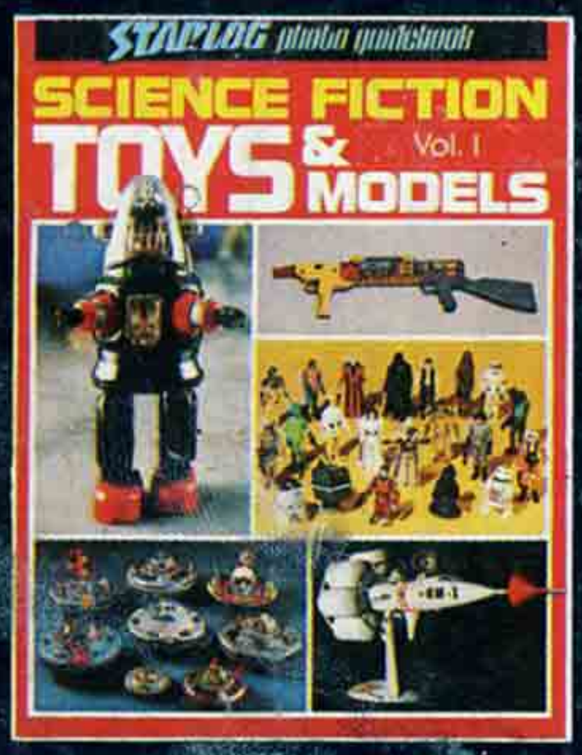

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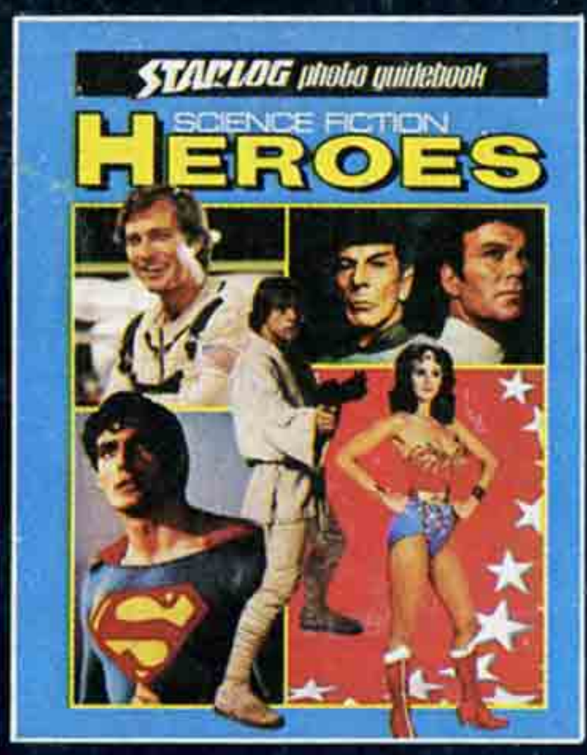

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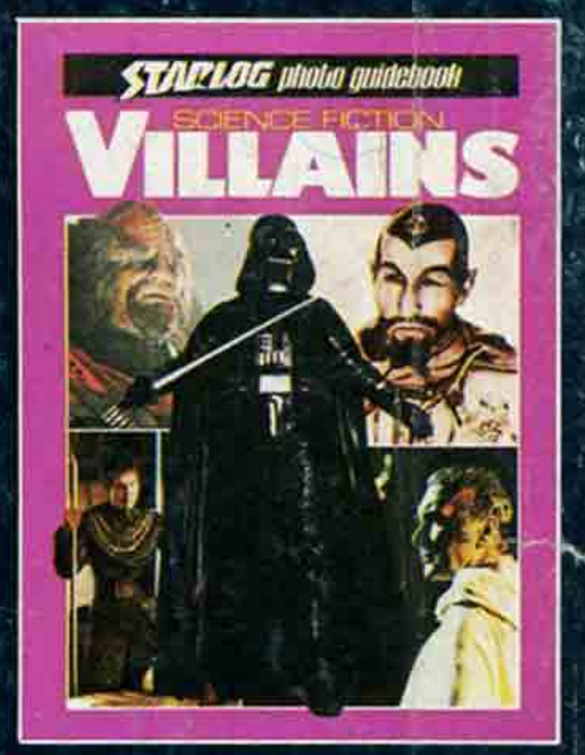

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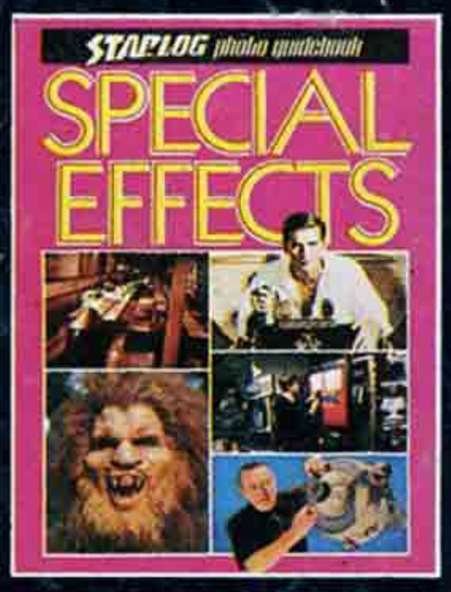

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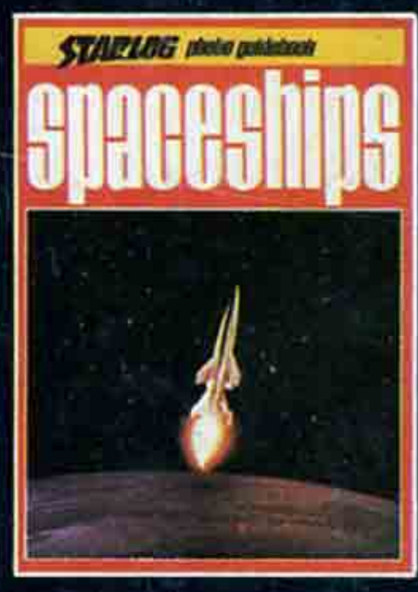

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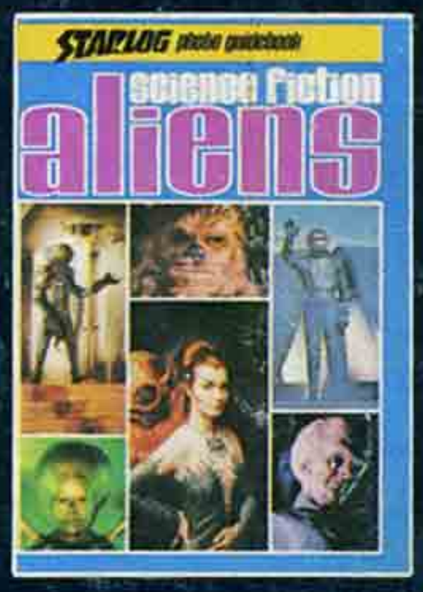

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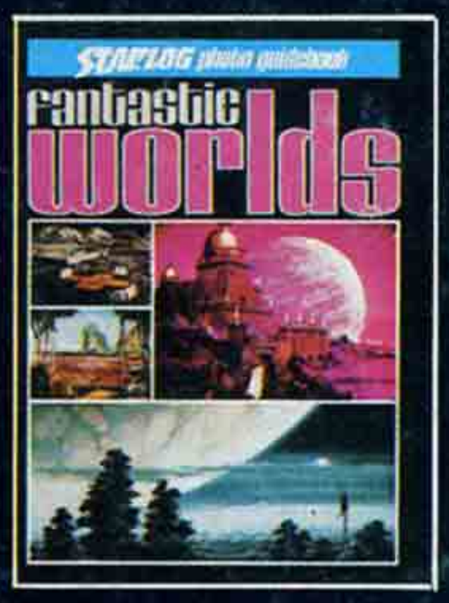

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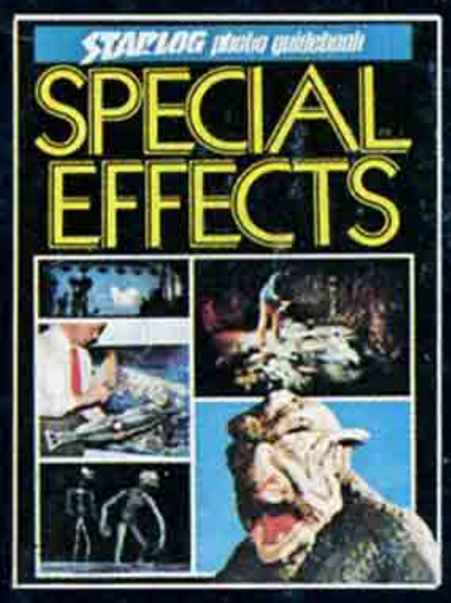

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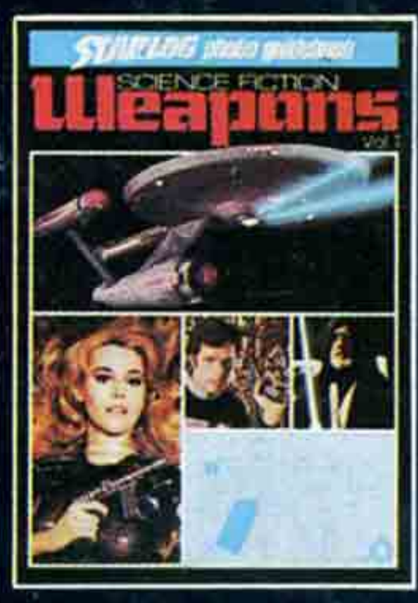

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